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CAN THE "UNITED NATIONS" SURVIVE?

THE Persian Government has appealed to the Security Council of Uno to find "an immediate and just solution" of its dispute with the Soviet Union. It bases its case, first, on the fact that the Soviet Union is maintaining its troops on Iranian territory after March 2nd in violation of the treaty of January 29th, 1942, to which Britain was also a party. Secondly, it complains of interference in its internal affairs by Soviet agents, officials and armed forces. The terms of its protest to Uno make it clear that the Prime Minister, Mr. Qawam Sultaneh, who was regarded as Soviet favourite and who suffered for his opposition to the Shah, is anxious not to quarrel with the U.S.S.R., which had threatened Persia with serious consequences if it lodged an appeal. It appears to have been brought to the point of appealing by Washington, which declared that America would raise the matter before the Security Council if Persia did not do so. The Soviet Union has asked for a fortnight's delay, on the ground that negotiations with Teheran are still proceeding. The United States insists that the Persian dispute should head the agenda on Monday.

It is difficult to see what defence the U.S.S.R. can make to the charge of failing to withdraw its troops on the promised day. The pledge was explicit, and disregarded. Russia has herself voluntarily joined Uno and accepted its terms of membership. On the substance of the dispute, as opposed to methods of getting her own way, Russia might have a strong case. Mr. Molotov complained to the Persian Premier of "a certain discrimination in Iran against the U.S.S.R.," and demanded oil concessions in the North and the recognition of Azerbaijan independence. The discrimination has undoubtedly existed, and, if we are in a world of power politics, Russia has as much right to oil concessions as Britain and America, whose influence (the Soviet Union will certainly assume) has been exercised in Teheran against the grant of similar concessions to the U.S.S.R. Russia may also have a case in Azerbaijan, and it seems likely that she will defend herself by pointing to the presence of British troops in territories which we at one time or another have occupied by force, and by declaring that she needs a "security zone" in Persia.

None of these general considerations, however, is relevant to the accusation that her troops are in Iran in violation of her promises and treaty obligations. If the Soviet Union, which has somewhat eased tension by evacuating her troops from the island of Bornholm, refuses to withdraw in Persia, the Security Council will presumably reach a decision which condemns Soviet action. Russia will have her friends on the Security Council, but Britain and America may be expected to rally an adequate bloc of votes against her. Russia can, of course, veto any decision involving action. In that case, it is open to question whether Uno should continue. If Russia withdrew, Uno would be transformed into a new form of the anti-Communist Axis. If Russia, as is more likely, did not withdraw, it is difficult to see that the future deliberations of Uno could have any utility. A point is quickly reached at which impotence becomes farcical.

The Struggle in Europe

The British Government's announcement that General Anders' army is to be gradually disbanded, that the Polish Government has promised a good reception to those in its ranks who return to Poland, and that Britain will make the best arrangements it can for those who prefer exile, is satisfactory. One element of friction and suspicion between East and West in Europe is thus removed—a bright spot in a picture otherwise dark.

In Poland the Government has sharply rejected Mr. Mikolajczyck's surely unreasonable demand for seventy-five per cent. of the seats for the Peasant Party if he agreed to a joint electoral list. A police raid was then carried out on the Peasant Party's headquarters, where it is alleged that incriminating documents were discovered. Mikolajczyck is accused of having had contacts with the anti-Soviet forces in Poland before the siege of Warsaw, and having maintained relations with General Anders recently. It is reported that as a result of these accusations the peasants are falling back on their immemorial form of resistance and beginning to hoard grain instead of allowing it to flow to the cities. In Trieste and in Venezia Giulia the Frontier Commission will find an alarming and complex situation. Reports reach us of incidents in Trieste which illustrate the entire situation. In one such incident the police opened fire on an unarmed crowd, killing two persons and injuring eighteen. According to AMG, the crowd, which was hostile and threw stones at the police, had been summoned by children who rang church bells as a prearranged signal. Our information makes us sceptical of both the official and Communist accounts. It is certain that incidents are staged, both by Communists (Yugoslavs and Italians) and by the anti-Communist Italians. In this case it seems likely the police had decided to clear up an area known to be Communist, and that they lost their heads when the order was given to shoot in the air. The Yugoslav underground movement is well organised in the city, and there is no doubt that violence would break out on a large scale if Trieste were awarded to Italy. If the town were made into an international city, the police, which is said to contain many ex-Fascist thugs, would have to be entirely reorganised. Equally important, the whole economic position of the city must be overhauled; to-day the black market thrives, and hunger is only less conspicuous than luxury. The Yugoslav press is now violently anti-British, the police character of Tito's State has become much more pronounced, and there is only too much reason to fear the revenge that the Partisans would take for Italian atrocities against the Slovenes during the war. The Partisan movement is enthusiastic and inspired by constructive ideas. But it also displays the intolerant and violent characteristics that one would expect from a movement that is at once militant, nationalistic, Balkan and revolutionary. The rumours of Yugoslav concentrations on the Slovene frontier should be treated with reserve, but no one should doubt that Partisan armies are capable of taking a hand in Italy, or in Greece, if civil war were to begin in either country.

Indian "Independence"

So far as Congress is concerned, the Cabinet Mission will begin its negotiations on India's constitutional problem in an atmosphere more favourable for agreement than seemed likely a few weeks ago. Several factors have contributed to this development. First, Mr. Attlee's forthright statement in Parliament last Friday that the British Government, while hoping that the Indian people would choose to remain within the British Commonwealth, nevertheless recognised India's right to elect for secession, has clearly made a profound impression in India. At long last the word "independence" has been used by the British Raj. This has confirmed the belief—which Mr. Gandhi has for weeks been trying to inculcate—that this time the British Government is sincerely determined to reach a solution, without reservations. Secondly, the big business interests within the ranks of Congress have come to realise, just as British concerns with large investments in India have done, that an immediate settlement of the constitutional issue is the only alternative to a state of anarchy in India in which they would stand to lose everything. Some ultra-Left sections of opinion here and in India are beginning to argue that an agreement now reached in India should be condemned as a "deal" between British and Indian capitalism "at the expense of India's necessary social revolution." We have no patience with these wrecking tactics. Unanswerable though the case is for radical social changes in India, they can only be accomplished by the Indian people after the settlement of the political issue of self-government. The disquieting feature in the situation is the intractable attitude adopted by Mr. Jinnah, who still seems to make the unconditional acceptance of an undefined Pakistan a prerequisite to the Moslem League's taking any part in the Constitutional Assembly, or in a Provisional Government. But perhaps Mr. Jinnah will eventually be persuaded by the results of the provincial elections to be more accommodating. In three more provinces—Bihar, Orissa and the United Provinces—Congress has won a clear majority.

India's Sterling Credits

The problem of India's sterling balances is bound to come up as an important issue as soon as the negotiators settle down to serious business. It is, of course, plainly out of the question for Great Britain to set free at once any large proportion of the Indian credits now frozen in London—the more so because, under the terms of the American loan agreement, we shall not be free to liberate funds on the condition that they shall be spent only within the sterling area. It is a matter partly of funding the debt, or providing for repayment by instalments, partly of handing over to Indian ownership capital resources in India now in British hands, and partly, one hopes, of providing services in kind for the development of India's industries, transport and general social equipment. What must be understood in this country—and is by no means fully understood—is, first, that India has borne a large part of the cost of the war, quite apart from any credit now owing to her—for a very large amount has been carried directly in the Indian budget; secondly, that both the Indian payments and the credits have caused inflation in India, and that the consequent burden has fallen mainly on the poor, who in India are the very, very poor; and, thirdly, that India was brought into the war by no consent of the Indian people, but by a purely arbitrary act of Great Britain. In view of these facts, it would be unjust as well as impolitic to ask India to forgo any larger part of the sums owing to her than it can be clearly shown to be beyond our capacity to pay, even over a very long period. We must meet these Indian claims, to the very limit of our capacity, if we are to hope for a satisfactory political settlement.

The World's Food

It looks as though Sir Ben Smith may have a rather discouraging report to make to Parliament next week on the results of his mission to Washington. Good news in relation to the world food crisis is that the Canadian Government has announced measures designed both to produce a balanced increase in Canada's output of foodstuffs of all kinds, and also to create a still larger wheat export surplus from this and next year's harvest. It is also satisfactory to learn that Australia will have an export surplus from the current harvest of 55 million bushels of wheat to be exported as flour—mainly, it would appear, for India and the Far East. Against this, the Wheat Committee of the Combined Food Board has run into an unforeseen difficulty. Though the Board has no plenary powers, and its recommendations require endorsement by the Governments of the wheat-exporting countries concerned, it had been hoped that it might have been able to issue an agreed programme of wheat allocation for the overall distribution of the world's exportable surpluses. This hope has been frustrated by the attitude of the Argentine, which has declined to divert to Unnra, India or the hard-pressed Western Zone of Germany any of the supplies which she had decided to sell to Spain and Portugal. As neither of these two countries is faced with particularly acute grain scarcity, the Argentine decision is presumably influenced by considerations of political links between kindred dictatorships. The result is that, though Mr. Hoover's Famine Emergency Committee in the United States is making every effort to stimulate still further the already great outward flow of American food supplies, the world's total resources of wheat will not be distributed among the hungry nations on an impartial estimate of needs. If there is to be effective international action to deal with the food crisis, whose duration is likely to be prolonged well beyond 1946, the Combined Food Board will have to be invested with real executive powers. As Mr. Noel-Baker said at the meeting of the Council of Unrra on Tuesday, "no institution of the United Nations can possibly succeed," unless Unrra provides the hungry people of the world with food.

Greek Elections

The Foreign Office statement makes it clear that the Greek elections will be held, as scheduled, on March 31st. Finding London unsympathetic to his request for a postponement, the Prime Minister, Mr. Sophoulis, has reconciled himself to elections which, as he confessed in one of his campaign speeches, cannot be fair, will be held under intimidation from the Right, and can only cause new and more bitter divisions in Greek politics. Unshaken by the resignation of some of the most important members of the Greek Cabinet, Mr. Bevin insists that the elections be held lest he be charged by the Russians with seeking an excuse to remain in Greece, and argues that there is no guarantee that, after an interval of two months, the abstaining parties would participate. To this the answer is that the amnesty has not been carried through, that the gendarmerie are inadequately purged, that the "X"-ite terror is admitted by all observers, including members of the Sophoulis Government. If a delay were used to restore the order which, as Mr. Sophoulis candidly conceded, is still altogether lacking, and to revise the registers, Britain's moral case for insisting on elections would be unanswerable, and even the most extreme groups would have difficulty in finding excuses for abstention. If they did then manufacture excuses for non-co-operation, the elections would have to proceed. At the moment, with only the Populists enthusiastic for an immediate contest—in which, contrary to their undertaking, the issue of the monarchy has been raised—Mr. Bevin's policy lacks both moral standing and political reality.

Peron's Successes

Although the Argentine election results are still incomplete, Colonel Peron has already secured a strong lead over Dr. Tamborini, the candidate of the Democratic Union. Since the Argentine President is selected by an electoral college and not by direct popular vote, the results in the province of Buenos Aires and in the capital itself—which return over one-third of the electoral college—are vital. It was hoped that Dr. Tamborini would at least win the city of Buenos Aires, which had a Socialist majority at the last elections, but even this now seems doubtful. In the Congressional elections, too, Peron's supporters have done extremely well, and will probably win a clear majority. In this case, the Opposition parties put forward separate lists—although they combined to support Tamborini—and many candidates supporting Peron slipped in on minority votes. Although the polling seems to have been fair, Peron had little need for electoral fraud. For several months the Opposition had been intimidated by the police and by mobs of Peron's supporters, and the state of siege was lifted merely for the day of the elections. The democratic parties, moreover, were tragically unable to sink their differences and to seize the chance offered by the elections. Peron as a dictator endorsed by a popular verdict will be even more formidable than in the past. This, indeed, is the most distressing development. His systematic wooing of the under-privileged by sweeping wage increases and similar reforms has brought him genuine mass backing. Both rural and urban workers, who know nothing of the larger issues involved, voted for Peron as their champion. No doubt Peron will have to tolerate Opposition spokesmen in Congress for the moment. But, unless his opponents learn the lesson of their defeat, Juan Peron may be very firmly in the saddle.

Control of Imports

The Government's decision that Britain's needs in raw cotton are to be met by continuing in peacetime the system, developed during the war, of bulk purchases under State control, is both good Socialism and sound common sense. Even that stout champion of economic liberalism, the *Manchester Guardian*, admits that the conditions of the post-war world are unlikely to be compatible with the free-trading methods of the Liverpool cotton futures market. But, apart from this consideration, it is clear that, if we are to have a planned Socialist economy in this country, there must be substantial State control of imports, not merely of cotton but of all the important categories of raw materials. We trust that the Government's declaration in favour of bulk purchase of cotton means that this system will be applied extensively to other commodities. We have consistently argued that only by this means can Socialism in Britain overcome the difficulties inherent in the commercial terms attached to the dollar loan.

The Future of the Cotton Industry

The report of the Working Party on the cotton industry, which is expected almost at once, will raise the entire issue of the future relations between the Government and the larger industries which are not on the list for prospective socialisation, but do plainly need to be reorganised in a comprehensive way. In this instance, the main issue seems likely to be that of compulsory amalgamation, on both the spinning and the weaving side. The smaller firms, especially those which are specialists in quality production, will obviously raise strong objections to any proposal that threatens them with compulsory merging into the larger concerns; and it is hinted that the report may try to meet these objections by allowing a period during which voluntary amalgamations can be arranged, and deferring any compulsory measures until it can be seen whether voluntary action has achieved enough. This, of course, is just what the Samuel Commission attempted in the case of the coal industry twenty years ago; and the breakdown of that plan is common knowledge. In cotton the difficulty is much greater; for the output of the cotton industry is much less classifiable than coal is as a single type of product, and the real specialist firms have a case for retaining their identity. When specialist goods of high quality are being made, there is no evidence of the superior efficiency of large-scale production—indeed, rather the other way. Most of the smaller cotton firms, however, are not real specialists, and the case for amalgamation is strong, provided the minority of such specialists, who form a big group, are not sacrificed. In spinning the problem is naturally less difficult than in weaving, because yarn is a more standardised product than price goods. Perhaps the report will differentiate in its treatment of the various sections.

Independent Producers

The main problem of independent film producers in recent years has been to secure adequate screen space—an increasingly difficult task as more cinemas have been taken over by circuits linked to the big producers. Nearly two years after the Films Council report on monopoly was lodged with the Board of Trade, Sir Stafford Cripps has decided to establish an Independent Board—on whose composition everything will turn—to select independent productions meriting wide exhibition. The Rank organisations and Associated British Pictures have given undertakings to show a definite proportion of such films, in addition to their quota of British products required by the 1938 Act. In rejecting the proposal to creat a compulsory arbitration tribunal in the film industry, Sir Stafford clearly hopes that the new Board will be able to ensure a fair deal for independent producers, who need help in securing studio space and equipment as well as the chance of exhibiting their work on a large scale. The major circuits are likely to respect their new agreements—and the Board of Trade is satisfied that their previous undertakings not to purchase more cinemas have been observed—because in two years' time the 1938 Act expires and the whole position of legislation for the film industry will have to be reviewed. If the present arrangements do not succeed, other and more stringent provisions are likely to be incorporated in the new Act.

Malayan Union Postponed

The Colonial Office has responded to demands that the plan for Malayan Union should be held up whilst the citizenship proposals are more thoroughly discussed with the Malay people and with the Sultans. It is clear that officials in Whitehall had too easily assumed that the situation in Malaya was little altered by events, and that a document taken from a pigeon-hole could be safely considered a blue print. They had overlooked the awakening of the Asiatic peoples during the period of Japanese occupation; and this applies to the mixed peoples of Malaya—including the Malays. It is with them and with the Sultans that discussions will be re-opened on the common citizenship issue. The Council of Sultans may now discuss secular matters without the prior consent of the Governor; Sultans' Advisory Councils will be set up in each State, the Sultans choosing the members; and, lastly, the Governor of the Malayan Union will be told that, unless he has the prior approval of the Secretary of State, he cannot assent to any Bills likely to evoke racial or religious discrimination. Mr. Creech Jones proved attentive in Parliament to criticisms from the Opposition, who obtained amendments designed to benefit the Sultans. It is hoped that in the forthcoming discussions in Malaya he will also consider the demands of the people for their political and trade union rights.

PARLIAMENT : The Control of Germany

Wednesday

For the first time since the enemy's collapse, after six years of planning and fighting, Parliament, on the initiative of a private Labour member, Lt. Col. Rees-Williams, debated the administration of Germany. The returning soldier would have seen Rees-Williams addressing himself to three Tories, no Liberals, a series of empty benches and about twenty Socialists. An inept handling of the business of the House had hustled this debate on to an adjournment motion at the fag-end of the day, so that only a few knew that Germany was "on."

Despite the lack of audience, there was no lack of speakers. Rees-Williams set them a high standard in a well-documented argument in favour of improved conditions of service for officers of the Control Commission. Other members increased the range of the debate. Why weren't more Germans being used by the Commission? Would the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster extend the Wilton Park scheme for the training of "White" P.O.W.s so that they could return and help in democratising Germany? Why didn't he appoint, with the help of the T.U.C., British Labour attachés to the Control Commission? Michael Foot again drew attention to the calamitous food situation in Germany, and denounced two newspapers which, he claimed, were to-day as irresponsible in their mischief-making about food shortages as they were responsible for the military disaster of 1940. This produced a digression on food and the merits of the *Daily Mail* in which Tom Proctor, Blackburn and Baldwin—the only Tory to speak in the debate—were intermixed. Baldwin objected to sending food to Germany; Proctor—though ruled out of order—objected to the *Daily Mail;* and Blackburn, in answer to a Tory taunt, objected that "it is not true . . . that the *Daily Herald* behaved in the same way as other Conservative papers."

John Hynd, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, whose status in the House has, till the present, rested on his competence at Question Time, gave a detailed reply at short notice. His most important negative point was that the British element in the Control Commission is only a quarter of Germany's Government. More positively, he was able to indicate that the administration of the British zone is efficient, and that he is actively concerned with a democratic revival in Germany.

Hynd was saying "We are endeavouring to spread out the available food to the best advantage, but it is obvious that 1,000 calories is a dangerous level. We are fully aware of the fact, and we have no intention—", when the Deputy Speaker had to adjourn the House. Members felt that the subject of Germany must be raised again as soon as possible, and Hynd's sentence concluded.

From Germany to India is but a step back. On Friday, the Prime Minister spoke in a send-off debate for the Cabinet Mission. "I have always hoped," he said, "that politically India might be the light of Asia." Godfrey Nicholson, Conservative member for Farnham, described the Prime Minister's speech as having "characteristic dignity and moderation." He made a movingly sincere plea that India should not be left to starve. "Rations for nine or ten million people are deficient," he said, "They are our fellow subjects and we in this House are responsible for them . . . I should feel it was very wrong if we made any relaxation in rationing restrictions in this country at the cost of India."

In our modern days, those are courageous words. They prove that the creeping cachexy of Twentieth Century nationalism has not utterly destroyed the Nineteenth Century liberalism which remains in all our Parties.

PHINEAS MINOR

THE CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES

NOTHING could be more dangerous or superficial than the cant talk that compares the foreign policy of Soviet Russia with that of Hitler, dismisses peacemaking as "appeasement," and assumes inevitable conflict between East and West. The war of nerves against Persia, the pressure brought to bear on the Teheran Government and the cavalier treatment of British and American Notes is certainly reminiscent of Hitler's technique. That Russia should use these techniques, even down to talking about threatening movements of Persian troops, is a tragic folly, the causes of which we must understand, just as surely as we must condemn its indulgence. But the difference between the Sudeten and Persian situations is more important than their similarity.

First, Russia is a devastated country rapidly turning its war economy to peace purposes with the energies of its people almost wholly devoted to reconstruction. While Hitler, as we know indisputably from the revelations of Nuremberg, wanted and intended war, Russia unquestionably wants peace. Moreover, while the Soviet Union has exaggerated fears for her own security, and uses Hitlerite technique to obtain satellites on her frontiers, the conception of a nation dominating the world by force is alien to a Power which is based on the dogmas of Marxian Socialism. Finally, while Germany was more highly armed and more powerful than other Powers, Russia cannot conceivably attack America or Britain; in fact, her rulers live in fear of attack from fully armed Allies who possess the atomic bomb. If war actually came, it could not be conclusive; the conception of an army of G.I.s occupying the Soviet Union (with nearly 200 million inhabitants) is as childish as the notion of Russians trying to run America. Another war could only have the effect of completing the destruction of the last one; it would be an affair of limitless devastation by new scientific weapons, and the extermination of millions of people by fire and famine. Moreover, as Mr. Lippmann has recently pointed out, such a war between the United States and the Soviet Union would have no objectives that anybody could define, and since there would be no neutral Power with authority to intervene, it would probably go on for an indefinite period without any possibility of conclusive results.

No doubt Mr. Bevin had these vital facts in mind when he made his statesmanlike speech last week-end at Port Talbot. He said that "the three different philosophies of Britain, the United States and Soviet Russia would adjust themselves in time if the nations were patient and not dogmatic about them." He did well to stress the conflict of ideologies, because as Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin agreed during the war, there is no reason for any clash of "national interest." All the Big Three Power *blocs* have at their disposal the materials for ensuring their own security and providing their own people with the type of life at which they aim. Nor is there any fundamental reason why their ideologies should clash. In spite of the differences of their cultures, all three ideologies derive from the same ideas which spread through Europe and the world after the Renaissance, and which found their classic expression in the French trinity of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. It is not an accident that Goebbels, who declared that Hitler's Germany would stamp out all the ideas of the French Revolution, was the spokesman of a country which went to war with Britain, America and Russia, and it is not an accident that these three countries in combination defeated the attempt to substitute the rubber truncheon for liberty, racialism for equality and German domination for fraternity.

Those who doubt whether the democratic conception is alive in the Soviet Union will find the experiences of Mr. Priestley in Russia particularly interesting. He has elaborated his recent broadcasts into a pamphlet.* His argument that Liberty has its home peculiarly in Britain, Equality in the United States, and Fraternity in the Soviet Union, has more to commend it than neatness of pattern. He argues that the Liberty of which Britons boast is not merely a question of *habeas corpus* and free speech, immensely important though those are, but also a cherished belief in a private world in which every man may develop his own special enjoyment and aptitudes without interference by neighbours or the State. Mr. Priestley might have illustrated his point by quoting Mill *On Liberty*, where in effect we are told that the merits of a State are to be measured by the number of eccentrics who thrive in it. That Americans believe in Equality and are so gregarious that Liberty of the British type means much less to them, is certainly true. A people who owe their national system to those who sought refuge from ancient tyrannies, they maintain their hatred of all the badges of privilege—though they are in danger, as Mr. Priestley says, of acquiring an even more privileged class through the inequalities of wealth.

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* *The Secret Dream. An Essay on Britain, America and Russia.* By J. B. PRIESTLEY. *Turnstile Press,* 2s.

Some will express surprise that Mr. Priestley found Fraternity in the Soviet Union. But, like others who have travelled extensively in Russia, he knows that, evil though the N.K.V.D. is, the absence of political freedom and civic rights are not matters about which the mass of Russians, who have never known these badges of civilisation, are usually aware. Mr. Priestley has been heartened and refreshed, as scores of others have been, by the vitality, the confidence and comradeship of everyday life in the Soviet Union. He finds that Russians still believe in a peaceful and prosperous world of ordinary people, and that they regard their own revolution as the basis of a world society in which the dream of human brotherhood is realised.

At this point Mr. Priestley must explain why the happy, purposeful, communal spirit he found in Soviet factories and collective farms in many different parts of the U.S.S.R. is so markedly absent in Soviet conduct towards the world outside Russia. His answer is that Russians, finding that the Revolution, which was to them the glorious beginning of a new era, was regarded outside as a kind of plague, reacted in a very human way and took refuge in a sour isolationism. Russians, he says, who are delightful companions when you get to know them at home, are reserved and ill-at-ease abroad. He writes:

> They may be haunted by their bureaucracies and the political police. They may be staunch communists venturing into the capitalist jungle. They may be folk of suspicious peasant stock encountering glamour and grandeur. They may be semi-Oriental persons still dubious about the West. But they are more likely to be haunted by this dilemma, that for fraternity's sake they cannot afford to be fraternal.

That is true of individual Soviet citizens. But it is an over-simplified explanation of Soviet conduct in foreign affairs. It is true that we have boycotted and made war on the U.S.S.R. (No Soviet citizen forgets, just as no Englishman recalls, that the last war ended in Archangel and not in Berlin). It is true that Soviet psychology is only explicable in terms of twenty years of hostility and anti-Soviet intrigue. The Russians were a suspicious people to begin with, and everything, from Winston Churchill in 1919, to Munich, to the refusal to share the atomic bomb, to Winston Churchill again in 1946, has confirmed their suspicions. But this is only part of the picture. The Soviet Union is controlled by the Communist Party, and Marxist theory has always assumed the bitter hostility of the capitalist world. The selfish fears of the West have made it easy for the rulers of Russia to present the outside world as irreconcilably hostile. But they were not, as Mr. Priestley seems to suggest, disappointed by Western hostility. They have built on it and exaggerated it in their internal propaganda. They have hidden from the people of the U.S.S.R. the real measure of friendship that did exist for the Soviet Union. Lest knowledge of the outside world should engender false hopes and weaken the Soviet citizen's resolution to sacrifice everything for his country's greatness, they have prevented free contacts and free travel between Russia and the West. They began with a doctrine of hostility, and have run no risks of allowing it to be discredited inside the Soviet Union.

There have been moments when this rigid isolationism has shown signs of weakening. For, though all Communists regard a struggle between Communism and capitalism as inevitable and believe in the final victory of Communism, not all Communists are agreed about the best way to pursue the struggle. Marx wrote of a *Klassenkampf*, not a *klassenkrieg*, and, just as there are more than two Marxist opinions about whether the struggle within the State necessarily involves civil war, so there are enlightened Marxists, of whom Stalin has been the most conspicuous, who have declared that world Socialism can be brought about by example and not by bayonets. In fact, in days of atomic warfare, no one but a maniac could hope to achieve Socialism by armed conquest. War would be nothing but a monstrous irrelevance in the ideological struggle. War cannot make America or the rest of the capitalist world Socialist. Similarly, if every town in Russia were atomised, that would not destroy the Socialist idea in the world, which was not born in Russia and which is the inheritance of every worker and peasant who suffers from the "contradictions of capitalism."

War is not, in fact, likely in the near future because the U.S.S.R. does not want it, Britain is exhausted and the U.S.A. is demobilising. The G.I.s. are going home. Somehow the immediate disputes must be patched up. But the problem of "adjusting" the rival philosophies and of building any *modus vivendi* between Russia and the West will remain, and it will be insoluble if those in control of the U.S.S.R. have so far given up the idea of adjustment that they do not even trouble to reply to diplomatic Notes or to keep to recently made agreements. The Russians have many real reasons for suspicion which we can, and should remove. We can make constructive proposals for international action in which the Soviet Union is asked to share. Mr. Priestley is right that, in so far as individual Russians are allowed to meet with friendliness from the West, they will readily respond. We must do all we can to reach them; much will depend on the tone and understanding of the Russian broadcasting that is now being instituted by the B.B.C. But unless there is also an official change in Moscow the ideological adjustment will not take place. What we may legitimately hope is that the realists in the Kremlin have by now become aware that, so far from dividing Britain and America by their present policy, they are creating the very capitalist *bloc* they fear. In that case the saner theory of offering the confused capitalist world an example of a peaceful and successful Communism may again gain control in Moscow, and a new opportunity will be presented to bridge by patient friendliness the gap which is now so dangerously wide.

COMPULSORY SERVICE

CONTINUANCE on its present lines of the call-up for compulsory military service is defensible, and is accepted by the country, on the strength of one argument only: that men who have served during the war merit release, and that they cannot secure it unless 18-year-olds and some men whose period of "reservation" has expired take their place. Two things, however, are clear. First, early steps must be taken to end the present complete uncertainty as to the length of service for which young men are being called up; secondly, Parliament must decide soon whether conscription is to be prolonged, even provisionally, after all the men conscripted during the war have been demobilised, and, if so, what the period of compulsory service is to be.

The present lack of knowledge of the Government's intentions is cruel to the young men who are being called up, and whose education or apprenticeship training is being interrupted for an indefinite period; and before it can decide whether to approve the prolongation of conscription into peacetime conditions, the country is entitled to know what length of compulsory service is contemplated. The argument that military service does a young man good will carry no weight. Apart from the interruption to training for civil life, time spent in "square bashing" and in the atmosphere of the barrack-room is much more likely to demoralise than to improve. This country will accept peacetime conscription only if it is convinced that it is an absolute necessity and that service is confined to the minimum essential period.

What is essential? The Government's argument in recent Parliamentary debates has been that it cannot at present forecast either the strength of the forces which can be raised by voluntary enlistment, or the magnitude of the country's "commitments," in the form of Occupation troops and garrisons needed abroad or of contingents earmarked for use, at need, by the Security Council of the United Nations. The Government has seemingly also failed, so far, to make up its mind what strategic influence will be exercised by the availability of atomic bombs on the size of land, sea and air forces. All we know at present is that, according to Mr. Bellenger, enlistment of volunteers for post-war regular service has not been brisk, though it is hoped eventually to secure good results from a recruitment drive.

At the moment a number of young men may prefer to stay in, or return to, the Services rather than face the uncertainties of civilian life in the transitional phase of reconversion. Whether, when conditions of full employment are realised, it will be possible to recruit a total of more than, say, 250,000 volunteers for the Services seems doubtful. In that event, the Service Chiefs, we may be sure, will argue that, since the intake for a single year class is of the order of a quarter of a million, at least two years' compulsory service will be necessary.

The Government, we trust, will stoutly resist such arguments. Not merely does two years' service represent an interruption of civilian life much more than twice as serious as that occasioned by twelve months' service; if this country is to maintain its export trade, and hence its standard of life, it cannot afford to divert to the unproductive Armed Services and to the factories supplying their needs anything like the volume of labour which two years' compulsory service, plus an enlisted force of 250,000, would represent.

To concentrate on "commitments," and then calculate the numbers required to implement them, is to begin at the wrong end. The correct approach to this problem would be for the Government to say that provisionally—until the turbulent aftermath of the war has settled down—the country is asked to accept one year's compulsory service (the most it can economically afford), and then to give a target figure for the regular forces to be raised by voluntary enlistment. To the total resulting strength our commitments must then be adjusted.

A LONDON DIARY

"WHAT is to be done about Ernest Bevin?" is the one question I hear Labour M.P.s asking in the House. If they did not respect him there would be no problem. Many of them feel for him, as I do, affection as well as respect. Personally, I cordially and publicly welcomed his appointment to the Foreign Office, and I know the younger M.P.s felt, as I did, that we must all support him to the full in his avowed policy of substituting as far as possible an economic for a political approach to peace-making. So far from being captious and critical, we have all been anxious to co-operate and to make every allowance for the immense difficulties of his job. We were all pleased when he reversed the Churchill policy in Greece, and we are now the more dismayed that he is determined to go ahead with elections that the Greek Premier himself says cannot be "free." The inexcusable methods of Soviet foreign policy seem to have confirmed all Mr. Bevin's deep-seated loathing of everything connected with Communism, and worse, since his row with Mr. Vyshinsky, Mr. Bevin seems to see the hidden hand of Moscow behind everything that happens. He cannot really think that the 85 Labour M.P.s who signed the very moderately worded memorandum about Greece last week were under Soviet or Communist influence, but he uses the trick of accusing critics of Communism in order if possible to brush aside their considered arguments. He treats well-informed and often right-wing Labour M.P.s as "disloyal" because they do not always and blindly agree with him. It is a dangerous state of mind for a Foreign Secretary. As a matter of fact, the British Labour Party can never be deeply permeated with the Soviet attitude towards life because it is alien to the whole of the British tradition. But that does not mean that a Socialist Party which has repeatedly disclaimed continuity in foreign affairs must always take the traditional Foreign Office attitude.

* * *

The *New Yorker* of March 9th contains an apparently factual article called "Police Duty." The author, James A. Maxwell, describes an experience in North Africa and gives the name of the British officer who was his companion. The central point of the story is the torture of an Arab from whom the British wished to extort a confession of murder. The details of the torture are described unemotionally. They are very horrible, though they are familiar enough as methods used by our recent enemies. The *Evening Standard* has made inquiries and learns that the name of the officer is fictitious; that Mr. Maxwell was in fact making a composite picture of several officers of different nationalities. He asserts that all the tortures he describes are used by British, American and South African soldiers. An inquiry should at once be made. The fact that no particular British officer is specified does not dispose of the allegation. Apart from the immense damage done to British reputation abroad by such stories, we have to find out whether it is true that the Allies have so far descended along this dark road. The story provides, as it stands, a ghastly illustration of the thesis that Arthur Koestler put forward in his wireless talk on Sunday night, that one reason why the world is going to hell is that we all increasingly accept the Nazi thesis that the end justifies the means. The story is told as an everyday affair of police duty. A striking feature of this, as of all torture stories, is that the man in the end confessed all he was asked to confess, but there is, as far as I can see, no proof that he was in fact the murderer.

* * *

> This strike is caused by the shop-stewards, many of whom are irresponsible men . . . It has become a state of being ruled by shop-stewards in the form of Gestapo and I thought the Labour Party was for freedom. Please, I must entreat you not to mention my name as it would be fatal for my husband who works at the Humber, and is in the Engineers' Union.

This is an extract from a letter from the wife of one of the Coventry strikers. It is no doubt true that many, though by no means all, of the factory conveners, or shop-stewards, are Communists. They take the lead in unofficial strikes, because they have political and organising experience. But if there were no deep grievances, they would be unable to bring workers out on strike as they did at the Humber works. Where, as in factories like Standards, these industrial grievances are not important, the influence of the shop-stewards cannot be exercised for political purposes.

* * *

At Humbers the workers complained of a "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude on the part of the management. The result of a long wage dispute was that the men went slow and the management sacked 550, including several of the shop-stewards, on the grounds of redundancy. That, said the men, is just a lock-out, the old technique of "firing" a mass of workers and then hand-picking the good boys for jobs. Their anger was directed as much against George Isaacs as against Humbers. The costly lessons of this infectious strike have been that unless there is a quicker procedure for dealing with wage disputes than at the present time—and, as things stood, discussions at Works, Regional and Central Conferences might take up to six months—the leadership of workers will tend to pass from Trade Union Officials to shop-stewards. The Government cannot disinterest itself in the question of wages.

* * *

I am dismayed to hear that the National Gallery Concerts, which are to be discontinued at the National Gallery on April 10, may cease altogether. Obviously this wonderfully popular and now essential part of the cultural life of London must continue in a new home. Those who share this view are asked to write immediately to the Appeal Organiser, National Gallery Concerts, 152 Kensington Church Street, W.8.

* * *

A thousand a year, with five hundred pounds tax-free, should be enough to relieve an M.P. who has no other income of anxiety about his family and enable him to meet the many unavoidable calls on his purse. It is not a penny too much. Few people realise how much an M.P. who does his job properly needs for essential expenses. I see over 300 estimate their expenses at over £500 a year. I know several who are spending two or three pounds a week on postage and phone calls alone. Others are reduced to the edge of real poverty by the necessity of living, somehow, in London, while they keep their own homes in their constituencies. As they can't afford a secretary, much of their time is spent in answering letters and doing purely routine jobs. Why not make an *ex-gratia* payment of, say, £200, to date back to the General Election? Those who can least afford it have been drawing on savings to meet their expenses.

* * *

Shinwell has always been opposed to the more drastic solutions to the coal crisis, such as the employment of German prisoners or foreign workers, believing that even the present force of miners could give us enough coal to meet essential demands if they could be persuaded to produce more coal per shift. The February output figures support his case. An average of more that 200,000 tons a week above the January level is a striking improvement, even if part of the increase is due to a drop in time lost through strikes. The vital figures are the decline in absenteeism and the higher output per man-hour. If recruitment can be maintained at the present level—a net intake of over two thousand men last month—we shall have begun to make some real headway. But a good deal still depends on giving the miners the long-term guarantees of the Miners' Charter.

* * *

I walked in the frozen garden with Mr. Parkes, after a fortnight's absence. Spring had stood still as if enchanted. The frosts and east wind had crinkled and powdered the surface of the soil, but the growing things seemed not to have moved since I last saw them. The winter aconites and snowdrops still stood shrivelled on their stalks. The crocuses were still half open; the lungwort still showed the same two blue and pink flowers, and the last shreds of winter jasmine still clung to the wall. The daffodil buds that were coming out two weeks ago were still unopened. Perhaps there were rather more yellow and blue primroses, and I noticed two wild violets in bloom; the buds of japonica showed rather more red and the wallflowers were tinged with orange at the tip. "I don't remember such a steady long spell of cold in March," I said. "It's what I call a seasonable March," declared Mr. Parkes. "Seasonable?" "Yes, this is how March always was when I was a boy forty years ago. We'd do better if March was like this nowadays, instead of coming later on nipping the fruit." I recalled that Mr. Parkes firmly believes that there are always as many frosts in May as there are in March minus those that happen in April, so I said: "But aren't we likely to get a lot of frosts later on if we get so many now? Unless we get a lot of April frosts, we shall have a lot in May to make up the quota." But you can't corner Mr. Parkes like that. "Oh, no; we have only had nine frosts so far." "What do you call a frost?" I asked. "When I can see it," said Mr. Parkes conclusively. CRITIC

QUITTING INDIA

Shall communal strife delay
India's Independence Day?
Or the slogan "Pakistan"
Sabotage Great Britain's plan?
No. The British Raj lays down
The brightest jewel in the Crown,
Britain yields her sovereignty,
India must and shall be free.

Final, total independence,
Rid of foreign superintendence,
Parliament, defence, religion—
India is the Indian's pigeon.
Indian self-rule must begin,
This is where the Raj came in.
Britons heartily agree
India must and shall be free.

Attlee clears the holy smoke,
India's not beneath the yoke,
Congress may or may not sit,
Britain is resolved to quit,
Even civil disobedience
Has exhausted its expedience,
Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims see
India must and shall be free.

Patel to Swarajists urban
Still is talking through his turban,
Sikhs may strike and Princes riot,
Gandhi may reduce his diet,
Jinnah may hold back the dawn,
But the Raj will be withdrawn,
Britain gives her guarantee
India must and shall be free.

Can the Mission stay behind
Years, till India knows her mind?
No. The Raj is not deterred,
Freedom will not be deferred.
India goes to Gunga Din,
Britain will not intervene,
This is Britain's last decree—
India must and shall be free.

SAGITTARIUS

MOUTHPIECE OR CHOIR?

THE Ministry of Information disappears at the end of this month. It might have ended more gloriously a few months ago, with its colours flying and its crew mustered on the decks. Instead, it has been allowed slowly to break up; most of its crew have long since abandoned it. It deserved a better fate because, after its many trials and many errors, it had justified itself and had done a good job.

After all these months of haggling about the succession, the resulting set-up is unimpressive and inherently unstable. The functions of the Minister now pass to two Committees of Ministers, both presided over by Mr. Herbert Morrison, Lord President of the Council. One Ministerial Committee will represent the Home Departments (Health, Labour, Education, Trade, Home Office, Supply Ministries, etc.); the other will represent the Overseas Departments (Foreign Office, Overseas Trade, Dominions Office and Colonial Office). The production functions will be vested in a Central Office of Information, under Mr. Robert Fraser, who has been Director of Publications at the Ministry throughout the war. It will produce, or commission, films, books and publications; it will organise exhibitions; it will be the issuing office for official Government papers. Then there are two Executive Committees, with Mr. Hector McNeil, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, as chairman of both. Again, they divide into "Home" and "Overseas." The members will be Departmental Executives, mainly the Public Relations Officers (now to be renamed "Information Officers") of the constituent Departments. These will be "Policy" Committees, giving practical direction within the framework of Ministerial policy determined by the Morrison Committees.

This is a cumbrous mechanism. Within it, the McNeil Committees will direct the policy of the Central Office of Information, whose Ministerial Executive is Mr. Morrison. He, as chairman of the Ministerial Committee, will give the policy directions which will produce functional directives for C.O.I. to the McNeil Committees. This seems to call for one of those Time-and-Motion studies about which we hear so much. The position of C.O.I. between the upper and nether millstones of "direction" is likely to be uncomfortable. The whole arrangement is a feat, and a freak, of compromise, in which the struggle of personalities is plain. The Ministerial presence of Mr. McNeil as chairman of the Executive Committees is, transparently, the Foreign Office effort to insert "checks and balances" against the overlordship of the Lord President of the Council. Both Mr. Morrison and Mr. McNeil are well qualified as persons for their new duties, but there is no sense of permanence in an organisation which depends upon Ministers appointed in their personal capacities.

It is equally apparent that the Government is terrified of any suggestion that this is a propaganda organisation. Even the P.R.O.s, for whose emanations (issued through C.O.I. as publisher) individual Ministers will answer, are being decontaminated and called "Information Officers" because "public relations" has become tarnished with the suggestion that it means tendentious publicity. But, while the concern is creditable, it is naïve. Unless this Government is prepared to do positive "promotion" of its ideas both at home and abroad, its policies will not be properly understood.

This naïveté is particularly apparent in the Foreign Office part of the organisation. Mr. Ivone Kirkpatrick, as Under-Secretary, will have under his supervision the F.O. Press Department, the British Council, Overseas Broadcasting, Guidance Telegrams (a valuable institution, so far used to provide "background" on events and policies for Dominions Governments, but now to be extended as "briefing" for our Embassies and Missions abroad), Press Attachés and other legacies from M.o.I. The British Council is to be pruned of any functions remotely suggesting "propaganda" or "publicity," and scrupulously confined to cultural relations. Overseas Broadcasting, including the vital European Service, is to be left under the B.B.C. on the specious argument that, if there were a Government Overseas Radio, foreign listeners would turn to the "independent" B.B.C., because they would feel that there they would not be getting "propaganda."

This is nonsense. No foreign listeners regard the B.B.C. as other than a Government-controlled agency, and nothing will convince them otherwise. All that the present device means is that the Government will subsidise the foreign broadcasts of the B.B.C., exercise "guidance-on-sufferance," and have no real control. The history of the European Service since the B.B.C. escaped from the wartime disciplines and lost the sense of mission (and the missionaries) which built its (and Britain's) moral prestige, gives cause for foreboding. Like the M.o.I., the European Service has a poor residual staff, a pathetic rump of its former vigorous team; and those who have a sense of post-war crusading are not going to be attracted to a step-child of a B.B.C. whose first, and proper, concern is the home licence-holder. The architects of the new Information Service have gone in neither for traditional building nor for functional pre-fab, but for a kind of bomb-damage repair, using the bricks and fittings of the house next door.

THE TREK TO PALESTINE

In a few weeks' time, when the ice breaks, another flood will rise and force its way from Eastern Europe westwards into Austria and down South. The great trek will begin, the migration of several hundred thousand Jews who at present are scattered in D.P. camps all over this part of the world, waiting for their signal to get on the move. This doesn't mean to say they are not moving now. Day and night a steady trickle of Jewish refugees, survivors from concentration camps, or so-called "U-boats" who had lived submerged in hiding throughout the German occupation, are on their way along a route which leads from Poland and Northern Roumania into Hungary, from there to Vienna, on to Linz, Salzburg and Passau, and across the border which used to divide Germany from Austria, but is now no more than an imaginary line running straight through the American Zone. Munich is the great clearing station. Here, in a tall building, is the headquarters of the "Council of Liberated Jews in Germany," an organization well provided with transport, food, clothing and other material help. From here the migrants are directed into Italy, towards Bari, the last port in Europe from which, sooner or later, they hope to embark for what they all believe to be their Promised Land.

There are at present, in a territory east of the Rhine and west of the Curzon Line, roughly 700,000 Jews, to which must be added another 150,000 Polish Jews on Russian territory. It is no exaggeration to say that a large majority of them have made up their minds not to settle down again in their former homes. In this, they may not distinguish themselves from the rest of Europe's displaced persons, the anti-Tito Yugoslavs of various shades, the Ukrainians, Poles, Estonians, Latvians and others. But it has become clear within the last few months that behind the migration urge of the Jews there stands indeed a sizeable organization directing the flood away from the slaughter-houses and graveyards of Central and Eastern European Jewry towards Palestine.

I spoke to one of these Scarlet Pimpernels who twice a week bring batches of people up to Vienna. This boy of about twenty-five, with the charming open face of a Slovak farmer, wearing a khaki shirt with his civilian clothes and fur cap, regularly goes backwards and forwards between Bratislava and the Vienna transit camp for Jews, supervising the transport, by road or rail or on foot, of sometimes a hundred and fifty Hungarian orphans, sometimes two hundred Polish Jews disguised as labourers from the Balkans, or fifty families from Roumania where alone a few families survived intact. This transit camp, supplied and administered with American Army help, holds four to six hundred people, none of whom stay longer than a day or two. There are many others like it scattered all along the route; the population of each never increases, but is always changing, filling up daily or weekly with entirely new contingents. Those sent down to camps in the British Zone feel definitely side-tracked. But they keep in touch. When, in a D.P. camp way down in Carinthia, I asked to see the leader of the Jews, I was told that he had not yet returned from his last trip to Salzburg.

These people have come up to Vienna by illegal means. They will go on legally, in railway carriages supplied by the American authorities and hitched on to civilian trains, until they reach Bavaria, and they will make their way down towards Bari by means as yet unknown to themselves. Not even the transport leader knows what happens beyond his immediate field of action. But this last part of their journey—made without help from the only Power favourable to their designs—is as a rule no less successful than the first; this is proved by the existence of large reception camps near Bari, and by the fact that small ships are at all times leaving that harbour in the hope of reaching the Palestinian coast.

"To Palestine" has become a battle-cry. Where there are frontiers, they are crossed by every ruse and disguise. Where there are obstacles, they are overcome by iron determination. These people have no money and no documents other than the blue number tattooed on their arms in Nazi prisons. They are unshaven, tattered, with tired, haunted looks in their eyes. The children often have a somewhat unearthly grace; one small Polish girl I saw had been saved by an S.S. man who couldn't resist her beauty and kept her in hiding for three days, pretending to have killed her according to orders and thrown her into a latrine. These people possess no more than a rucksack full of dirty clothing, the recollection of their murdered family and an unspeakable horror of the places of their annihilation. They do not realise nor care to be informed that, apart from Arab opposition, even with the most modern methods of irrigation and soil cultivation only a fraction of them can hope to settle in Palestine. What they do know is that in Poland to-day anti-Semitism still exists, and that elsewhere only the barest necessities are provided for them, while Allied soldiers remain, but probably not thereafter. They are also well aware that behind them stands the only Jewish community of wealth and influence still in existence. Before the advent of Hitler, Zionism was no more popular among them than migration to the U.S., where so many of their race had made good before them. But now, from America, together with quantities of food dispensed by the Joint Distribution Committee of the Jewish organizations, comes moral support for Zionist claims alone.

Again, if plans had been devised after liberation for restitution in their original home countries, a number of older people would have stayed. Where, as in Bulgaria or Transylvania, a certain amount of good will was shown to surviving or returning Jews, some whole communities have settled down again to an orderly existence. In Vienna, only a quarter of the Jewish population have expressed the wish to emigrate to Palestine. And while all Polish Jews beyond the Curzon Line are streaming westwards, the Russian Jews have shown no desire to join the movement. Nor are there signs of a strong Zionist revival in the States of Western Europe. It is from Poland, Hungary, Roumania and Slovakia, where open hostility was shown to the returning Jews whose property had long been absorbed by the local population, that the great majority of the migrants recruit themselves.

Members of the Anglo-American Committee who lately pursued their inquiry into the state of European Jewry in these parts are in no doubt about the gravity of the situation. It is to be regretted that, when the Committee was set up, no attempt was made to secure Soviet co-operation, and that in consequence members found themselves unable to visit Hungary and the Balkan countries. There is, however, no reason to believe that they are handicapped by a lack of information on conditions in these regions. In order to examine the situation in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria, they have made contact with representatives of all Jewish organizations as well as with the authorities responsible for them. In Vienna, as elsewhere, open hearings were held daily and visits made to the reception and transit camps. One almost feels that too much time was spent on exploring all aspects of the Jewish problem as distinct from the European problem as a whole. Looking into the abyss of misery into which Jewry has fallen, some of the members may have forgotten that Europe's lack of food and widespread devastation suggest an exodus also to the rest of its inhabitants, and that, were a census taken among the non-Jewish population of the starving cities, a fair percentage of them would be found anxious to emigrate.

However that may be, the Committee seems in full agreement on the issue—that great masses of people are already in flux, and that their determination to leave Europe will soon result in a panicky stampede towards Palestine. In Bari and Jerusalem the Committee have now had ample opportunity to confirm these facts. But agreement on the issue does not mean agreement on a possible solution such as the Committee will have to work out early in May. Meanwhile, the problem will have assumed the utmost urgency. A stream of desperate people will be on the way whose onrush must be stopped by armed force or diverted. A solution must be found while it can still be carried out and before the situation gets irretrievably out of hand. **Hilde Spiel**

IS THERE A "GERMAN" DISEASE?

Ever since this country became fully aware of the facts about the German concentration camps, people have asked themselves whether the disease of the mind that produced them could be a wholly German affliction. Now, with the War Crime Trials nearing their end, and the impending punishment of those chiefly responsible for atrocities, there may be a tendency to feel that Justice has been done, and the ghosts of those haunting victims of torture may no longer pursue our conscience.

Yet one may also feel that when passions have to some extent died down, a more detached examination of the underlying situation is indicated. For the revelations of excessive and phantastic cruelty that first reached the general public in the spring of 1944 have had a curious effect upon people. Some have felt as though not only the German nation, but all of civilised mankind, was on trial. Others have hastened to assert that every single person of German origin ought to be punished by the same methods of torture and reprisal. For example, after a recent case of fraternization with German prisoners of war, a clergyman indignantly spoke against women who pampered "these people who were guilty of atrocities"; he evidently felt that though these particular Germans may never have been near the scene of such atrocities, they were universally to be condemned.

Contrary to the general belief, the effect of witnessing extreme human suffering and inhuman cruelty is not deterrent. It has released, in many harmless people openly, and in less harmless ones, secretly, the desire to act in the same way towards the men and women who committed the bestial acts. In other words, the disease has been caught. Yet reason tells us that the infliction of cruelty degrades more than the most agonising suffering, and we know that, in spite of their appalling condition, many victims of Belsen and Buchenwald had a better chance of mental stability than their warders. Thus it was possible for elements of the political and intellectual *élite*, and the Jewish element, with their centuries-old adaptation to persecution, to build a network of enduring moral fibre throughout the camps. Their warders, on the other hand, suffered from the psychic disease in its extreme form to which the authoritarian character is specially prone. Complete submission to authority, and brutality to those in their power, was the keynote of their mental functioning. Between those two extremes there remained no room for individuality, no Self.

To a lesser degree, this condition might have been observed a long time before the discoveries of concentration-camp horrors. It was a lingering disease of long standing whose clinical observation was hindered, before the war, by a smoke-screen formed of propaganda on the German side, and a certain wishful blindness on ours; yet there was no shortage of diagnosticians who had spotted the course it was taking.

The present bewilderment of the Germans is, so eye witnesses agree, best relieved by immediate strict and authoritative direction. The apathy and despair of those who have lost their Fuehrer give way to obedience to their new masters. This trait of submissiveness seems to have gratified some observers, disgusted others; but it is the inevitable counterpart of the lost mass superiority which proved to be a delusion. Can we trace this illness to its psychological and social sources?

Individuals suffering from sado-masochism abound in the consulting room. Their illness has been elucidated by Freud and his followers, and as a group phenomenon, it has been made understandable to the general public by Edward Glover, Erich Fromm, Ranyard West, J. C. Flügel[*] and others. Their observations show that groups of people suffering from this mental peculiarity will easily form round the more powerful and usually more deluded individuals. The strength of such a movement is based upon the fact that there are elements of the sado-masochistic kind prevalent in many apparently normal human beings. Given abnormal conditions, you may get the sporadic occurrence of such a group-illness in a fairly healthy society. The present post-war "crime-wave" might be regarded in that light. But given a period of steady social progress, the healthy individuality of the citizens as a whole will tend to isolate the occurrence of the illness and prevent its spread. In an authoritarian society, however, the soil for these sado-masochistic "cultures" is fertilized all the time, from above as well as from below.

For a study of the German character, the experts have gone far back into History and even Mythology. Lord Vansittart chose the former, the late Dr. H. G. Baynes the latter method.[†] The study of individual cases of sado-masochism, however, would be incomplete without a full account of the earliest influences affecting the patient's psychic development. May we not equally learn something about the conditioning of this generation of Germans by going back to their Nursery, the Nursery of a German child in the 'teens of this century? It must be a child of the lower middle class, for it is in that class that the thickest spread of the disease occurred. From its earliest moment, such a child knew the effect of Authority or "method." Swaddled to the point of suffocation, regulated like an automaton, clean and obedient before it could speak or walk, such a child was the property of the adults, and of some inexorable LAW. When it could toddle, the social virtues were impressed upon it, in this order: Obedience, Punctuality, Thrift, Cleanliness, Manners. Obedience general and unmitigated, to God, to one's parents, to one's teachers, to adults, in fact to everybody. Knowledge, therefore, consisted mainly in learning what was allowed. If it was allowable to know about Latin verbs, one would learn them. One's feelings were regulated by a motto which could not fail to be inscribed in the poetry book each child kept, by a thoughtful relative:—

> Schmerzt dich in tiefster Brust
> das harte Wort: Du musst,
> so macht Dich eins nur still,
> das stolze Wort: Ich will!

This is what the text-books might call: Education for Masochism. To alleviate the awful pain of having to submit to authority with the whole of his Self, the child takes authority—the "you must"—into himself, and treats it as gospel truth, until the command becomes one with the person's will; thus pride begins to show itself in obeying these commands, and the more brutal they are, the more pride and triumph is shown. The nature of the command is no longer in question. If it is murder, one kills. If it is bestiality, one becomes a beast. "They"—the powers above, the Fuehrer, the gods, take all the responsibility.

To return to the Nursery. When a small child receives a personal reprimand, as all children do, for personal wrong-doing, that does not hurt much if it comes from a loving parent or nurse. The child will try to understand. But if it comes in the name of Authority in general, impersonally given, and uncompromising, in terms such as "a child must not climb"—then it is utterly devastating to the weak, helpless self which tries to learn about the world. Such brutal teaching, it may be objected, occurred in the last generation, not only in Germany, but even in this country. Why, then, should it produce such a devastating effect upon the German child? The answer is that the experiences of the last world war thoroughly reinforced the personal by the social influence. Things that cannot be understood by small children are starvation and separation. Many German school-children in 1916–17–18 were living on oats boiled in water, beetroot, and a little bread and margarine. Babies had too little milk. These events were bound up in their minds with the loss of fathers, with their own wrong-doings, and with their mother's suffering. Acute oral deprivation has devastating consequences. Three ways of dealing with the prolonged lack of food were common among German children: dreaming of food, stealing food, and despising or rejecting food. The phantasy of unlimited food, the "Schlaraffenland," in part underlay the later dreams of universal love and understanding fostered by the Weimar Republic which, alas, failed for their lack of reality basis. The second way, that of stealing food, is nothing unusual among juvenile delinquents in a normal society. But in the German psychological setting, it played an enormous part in the determination to get enough, by any means, and at anyone's expense, so that there should never be shortage of food in Germany again. This was one of the incentives for conquering the adjoining productive countries. The third way, that of despising or rejecting food, is perhaps the most dangerous for psychological development. It gradually lays young people open to ideas of self-sacrifice of body and soul. "Guns before butter." It is the way of suicide, the way of the Hitler Youth.

Will History repeat itself, psychologically, for the present young Germans in their defeat? Will starvation, lack of individual prospect of development, and the knowledge of belonging to a hated and inferior race, intensify their sado-masochistic character traits? Technically, it may be impossible to get skilled help on the job quickly enough, and in sufficient numbers, to work at the present moment, when vital change for the better is possible. Public opinion will not allow the Germans to be considered a problem for relief and reconstruction before the Allied and Liberated Countries have had their full share. Once before, Germany, in her defeat, humiliated in her own mind, shocked and surprised the world by her satanic inventiveness, in the desperate attempt to ward off that danger of encirclement which her delusion had produced. Her rearmament was, of course, impossible without the social, economic and international factors operating at the time; but the total devotion of lives to this task arose from the mass epidemic of despair which followed the last war.

It has here been impossible to do more than point to a line of investigation which might lead to an eventual diagnosis of the "German" disease of the mind. Without such a diagnosis, our most determined attempts at re-education will remain limited in their effect. We might find that our approach, whether tending towards the stern or the kindly extreme, was not really free from the dread we all have of examining the dark recesses of the human mind. Once we accept the fact that excessive submission and excessive cruelty are to be found in our midst, we can begin to study their aetiology near at hand. We can even recall, as an example, a recent newspaper account of a husband who submitted freely to many indignities his wife inflicted upon him, but eventually was led to defend himself against her with the help of an iron that killed her. In this extremely abnormal relationship, there are operating, nevertheless, fundamental psychological laws, whose working we see, in grotesque exaggeration, in the actions of the German war criminals now indicted by the Allied Courts. **Margot Hicklin**

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[*] Edward Glover: *War, Sadism, Pacifism.* Erich Fromm: *The Fear of Freedom.* Ranyard West: *Psychiology and World Order.* J. C. Flugel: *Man, Morals and Society.*

[†] H. G. Baynes: *Germany Possessed.*

THE BIOLOGICAL RISKS OF ATOMIC ENERGY

Much has been written about the dangers of the atomic bomb, but little has yet been said concerning the possible risks to humanity of the widespread use of atomic energy in peace. When atomic force is utilised for industrial purposes it will mean that in certain localities a type of energy will be liberated which existed at an earlier phase of the earth's history before the advent of life, but which is only found here now in very small quantities. What is likely to be the effect of this on man's body, and more particularly on those cells of the body which are responsible for the continuation of the race? It is a well-known fact that these cells are particularly sensitive, and there are some who believe that they are occasionally affected adversely by some of the chemicals used in this industrial age. It is true that in their preliminary report the Royal Commission on Population has stated that it finds no evidence that involuntary sterility is an important factor in the fall in the reproduction rate, but many of us who have made an intensive study of human fertility will disagree with this verdict. There are a great many males in this country who are apparently in excellent health and who yet prove on examination to be either completely sterile, or else to be so gravely infertile that it is unlikely that they will ever have children. This disability cannot be accounted for by any previous illness, and although it would be unwarrantable to assert that the degenerative changes found in the sex glands in these cases are due to the absorption of some unknown chemical, this possibility cannot be excluded.

Under the leadership of the physicists we are now about to pass out of the chemical into the atomic age. What will be the effect of this? Nobody can yet give an answer, but there are certain biological risks which should be carefully considered. It is well known that by the use of comparatively small doses of X-rays human beings can be sterilised, and that by means of even weaker doses changes can be brought about in the genetic constitution of the germ plasm. Whilst it would be unjustifiable to apply to human beings the results of X-ray experiments carried out on insects and to predict that the extensive use of atomic energy will be followed by the appearance of subhuman mutants, this is a risk which must be taken into account. Shrödinger writes of X-rays, and X-rays are comparatively innocuous when compared with the energies about to be used, as follows:

> The indirect dangers involved as burns, X-ray cancer, sterilisation, are well known, and protection by lead screens, lead-loaded aprons, etc., is provided, especially for nurses and doctors who have to handle the rays regularly. The point is that even when these imminent dangers to the individual are successfully warded off, there appears to be the indirect danger of small detrimental mutations being produced in the germ cells—mutations of the kind envisaged when we spoke of the unfavourable results of close breeding. To put it drastically, though perhaps a little naïvely, the injuriousness of a marriage between first cousins might very well be increased by the fact that their grandmother had served for a long period as an X-ray nurse. (*What is Life?* by Erwin Shrödinger.)

It may be said that by the time atomic force is available for industrial purposes efficient methods of protection will have been devised. In the manufacture of the atomic bomb valuable experience has been gained which will be of use also in safeguarding workers with atomic energy. Some of the safeguards employed have been described in the Smythe Report, which observes:

> Since both the scale and the variety of the radiation hazards in this enterprise were unprecedented, all reasonable precautions were taken; but no sure means were at hand for determining the adequacy of the precautions.

It will be noted how guarded the writers of the Report are concerning the efficacy of the protective measures. And their caution was justified, for atomic fission produces intense radioactivity in the surroundings of the pile. It would appear that radioactive substances are dispersed into the atmosphere through the stacks and also by means of the coolants used. For cooling a large plant as much water may be required as is consumed by a town of considerable size. Who will be able to guarantee that the water so used has lost all of the radioactivity imparted to it before it is returned to its source or otherwise disposed of? It will be noted also that the Report is solely concerned with the preservation of the general health of the workers and not with its biological effects. No attempt was made to investigate the influence of the products of atomic fission on the germ-plasm.

Hitherto the technicians and the industrialists have always led the way, and if at a later date it was found that their activities have raised problems of health, the doctors have been called in to deal with these. Surely the time has now come to change this. It was justifiable to take risks at a moment of national emergency, but the need for this has now passed. We are fully aware that the energies we are about to utilise have a marked influence on our bodies, and it would be absurd to permit the industrialists and the technicians to proceed with their venture without at the same time making an intensive study of its possible biological repercussions. Tissue culture has provided us with a means of investigating the effects of radiations on the living organism, and by this method, supplemented by animal experiments, valuable knowledge could be gained not only of the damage that may be inflicted by the products of atomic fission, but also of the efficacy of measures of protection. The Smythe Report frankly states that a combination of the alpha-ray activity of plutonium, with its chemical properties, makes it "one of the most dangerous substances known if it gets into the body." Surely no time should be lost in setting up a competent committee of biologists and doctors to study the best means of protecting men from this, the latest manifestation of human "progress." It will not be enough to be assured by the physicists and the technicians who will be responsible for the development of atomic energy that all these matters have been carefully considered, and that the health of all workers will be safeguarded. Larger issues are at stake; not only the well-being of the individual, but possibly even the future of the race.

Kenneth Walker

PRAYER FOR A PRIVATE NOTEBOOK

Believe me, Lord, these pages few
Are not the sort of thing for You:
The scribbler's occupation's gone
If You persist in looking on.
Look inward then, for once, and try
To rest that strained, all-seeing eye.
How could it interest You to know
The private things I scrawl below?—
A crossword clue; an epigram;
A recipe for marrow jam;
A book that some reviewer said
Was one that should be, must be, read;
A line or two of home-made verse
Which might be better, could be worse;
Thoughts which your dignity immense
Might censure as irreverence;
Trifles, in short, which I incline
To spare your oversight divine:
Indeed, Lord, if I may be frank,
I'd rather leave these pages blank
Than not feel sure that You will skip
For once your rights of censorship.
That's all: forgive me if my note,
Not meaning to, has got your goat;
But when I take up pen and ink
I always write just what I think.

Allan M. Laing

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Miss B. M. E. Jones.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Cambridge University Tiddlywink Eight yesterday defeated Oxford by seven games to one in what is likely to become an annual event. Now they propose that members of the team to "tiddle" for the University should have their prowess recognised by the award of a "Quarter Blue."—*Sunday Dispatch.*

P.M., ex-Communist from the Birkenhead shipyards who was re-converted over a glass of Guinness, was elected vice-president of the Young Christian Workers.—From *The Universe.*

He said that when our fortunes were at a very low ebb during the war a member of our diplomatic service in Spain gave a very good cocktail party. Afterwards two or three Spaniards came up and said: "Now we really know you are going to win the war!"—*Daily Telegraph.*

While the division was being taken a man in the Strangers' Gallery sprang to his feet and shouted: "Long live our Socialist Government." He was immediately silenced and removed.—*The Times.*

RADIO NOTES

It would be interesting to know what Americans thought of last week's *Transatlantic Call*. Perhaps there will have been some people over here, relations of the G.I. brides, who accepted at its face value the Columbia Broadcasting System's bland version of those brave young persons' first days in their new home. And it would be cynical to suppose that they were mistaken in so doing. But others, who do not care for their lilies so gilded as to be indistinguishable from artificial flowers, may, I think, have felt the need for some tiny interruption among the roses round the door, some note of regret however transient, of dismay however slight, some harmonic asperity not immediately resolved by a fat common chord. The nursery atmosphere of this broadcast was hardly mitigated by the rudimentary technics of American radio production, which in this case instigated a great deal of unnecessary music, much of it quite obviously at variance with the situation. Few if any of our own producers indulge in such orgies as this; yet the first of Rayner Heppenstall's series, *Voyages of Discovery*, flew directly in the face of what progress has been made in production methods during the last fifteen years. The library of recorded effects was ransacked for howling wind, creaking rowlocks, slapping water, seagulls; while Mummerset accents and jolting transitions made up the sum of the hurly-burly. A pity, because the story of Henry Hudson is a thrilling one, and Mr. Heppenstall's narrative was uncommonly well written. May I suggest a rather less ambitious lay-out for the future programmes in this series?

Arthur Koestler's much-postponed talk on our contemporary dilemma turned out to have been worth waiting for. That clever publicist expressed himself trenchantly and without the verbal fuss and pretentiousness which becloud much of his written prose. Only very limited ends justify their means, because the human mind cannot see very far; and—this was the apex of the broadcast—ethical absolutes may or may not exist, but it is necessary to behave as if they did. I cannot think that this conclusion, which is cardinal for the present juncture, differs essentially from that recommended by Father Martindale in his current series of talks on "The Necessity of God." Faith is involved in both cases; the difference is only one of degree.

After the "white" voices to which so much of broadcasting has accustomed us, it is a pleasure to hear one that is thoroughly saturated by the colour of a personality. A similar thought occurred to me while listening to The Concertgebouw Orchestra's magnificent performance on March 11th. Unlike our own orchestras, this one has an individual physiognomy which derives chiefly from the supremely fine quality of the string playing. It is not often that one can tell, without looking at the orchestra, whether the bows are attacking the strings from above or below; yet this difference of approach is, of course, very important, and I swear I could distinguish it on this occasion. The result was a diapason which continually delighted one by the beauty and assurance of its tone. For this reason alone Andriessen's *Variations on a Theme of Kuhnau* probably seemed better music than it really is. A good piece of minor composing—say the equal of Pizzetti—it made a very agreeable effect on the ear.

The programme of Elizabethan madrigals given by the West Country Singers on March 12th made me wonder whether the British Council would not be well advised to include this excellent body among our representatives abroad. I well remember the triumph accorded to the English Singers in Vienna in 1922 and see no reason why the West Country ensemble should not be given a similar chance.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*Sunday, March 24th.* Concert (2.30 p.m.); The Human Mind (Cyril Burt, 7 p.m.); American Letter (7.30 p.m.); Dobson and Young (9.30 p.m.).

Monday, March 25th. Mozart and the Concerto (Forces Educational Broadcasts, L.P. 3 p.m.); Dohnanyi (Recital, 11.30 p.m.).

Tuesday, March 26th. Concert (7.30 p.m.); Recital (Nina Milkina, 10.15 p.m.); The Importance of Romain Rolland (11.3 p.m.).

Wednesday, March 27th. Beethoven Recital (1.15 p.m.); Facts First (6.20 p.m.); Concert (7 p.m.); Theatre Programme (L.P. 9.30 p.m.).

Thursday, 28th. So This is Love (11.3 p.m.).

Friday, March 29th. Britain Through Jamaican Eyes (6.20 p.m.); Mozart Quartet (7 p.m.); Voyages of Discovery (9.30 p.m.); Insect Poems (11.30 p.m.).

Saturday, March 30th. Concert (2.15 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

AT ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S

FOR the third of the concerts which are being given in this ancient and beautiful church, the choir of St. Matthew's, Northampton, visited London and included in their programme three choral pieces which had been especially composed for them. The shortest of these, a motet by Edmund Rubbra to words by Vaughan, was beginning to make an impression by its solid polyphonic skill when it came to a rather unexpected end—unexpected, that is, to those of us who were unprovided with the words. It is an inescapable fact that choral music is not absolute music; and without any key to the composer's intentions, some passages are bound to seem obscure to the listener. An extreme instance was provided by Britten's fascinating but "queer" setting of Christopher Smart, *Rejoice in the Lamb*: if we fail to catch the word "cat" (and nothing is easier), what can we make of the long chain of *fioriture* on the solo organ in which we are intended to see the poet's cat, Jeoffry, "wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness"? (by the way, the organist's articulation of this delicious passage was decidedly smudgy). Lennox Berkeley's *Festival Anthem* takes its words from Herbert and Vaughan; its opening and closing sections attempt a massive, semi-polyphonic style which seems a little outside this composer's scope; but in between comes a stanza from Herbert's poem, *The Flower*, set as a treble solo to music of surpassing tenderness and intimacy.

The remaining choral work was a *Festival Te Deum* by Benjamin Britten, composed to celebrate the centenary of St. Mark's at Swindon. In spite of its title, it is conceived on a modest scale: a good deal of the choral writing is in unison, no words are repeated, and the whole thing lasts barely ten minutes. On paper, it looks almost too simple; but, as so often happens with Britten, we are astonished at the effect made when the notes are transferred from paper to reality: to take one small example, the curious flavour given to the words "the sharpness of death" by the *pianissimo* D held by the trebles against the common chord of A in the remaining voices. The startling purity and innocence of this little piece places it, I think, among the most magical of the composer's achievements.

In the middle of so much that was fine-drawn and even exquisite in manner, it was a sad error of taste to introduce the gaudy *Cathedral Windows* of Karg-Elert, in which noble plainsong melodies are bedizened with the musical equivalent of lipstick, and the "Adeste fideles" acquires a joggity counter-melody irresistibly reminiscent of *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*.

It has been an exciting experience to hear the Brahms *Violin Concerto* played twice within ten days, with the same conductor (Boult) and the same orchestra (B.B.C.), by the two outstanding "post-war" Continental violinists, Arthur Grumiaux and Ginette Neveu. As virtuosi, both are of the highest rank; but M. Grumiaux was content (at any rate on this occasion) to float with serene grace over the surface of the music. One cannot listen to Mlle Neveu, on the other hand, without being aware that one is in the presence of genius. She attacked those famous passages in triple-stopping in the first movement with unforgettable ardour; and, indeed, her whole conception of the work was infused with a kind of intellectual passion which, when allied with technique, provides the most intense pleasure music can offer.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Antony and Cleopatra," at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge.

"The Lady from the Sea," at the Arts Theatre, London.

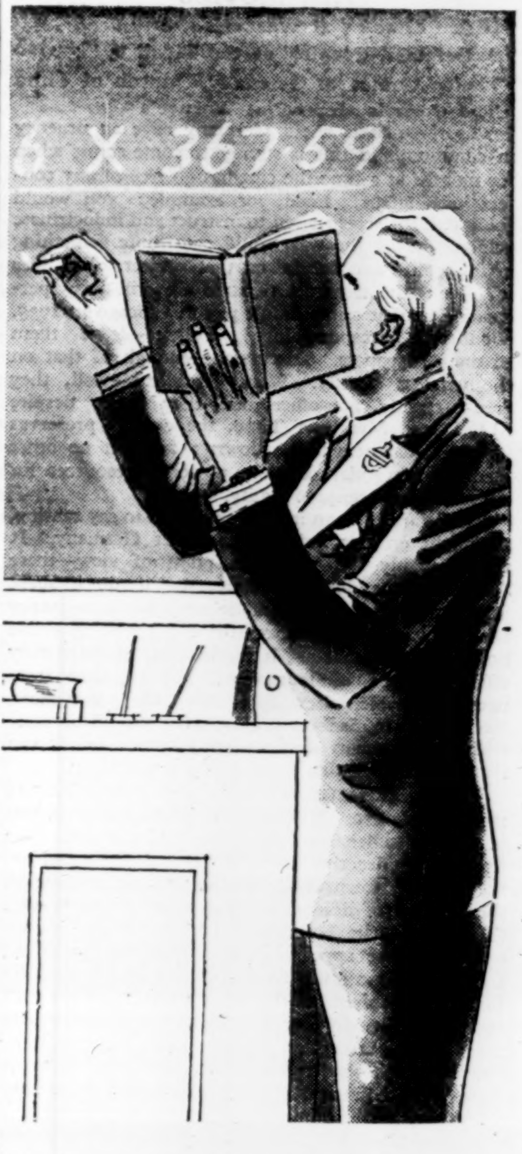
Despite the abstention from the stage of the dons whose experienced acting has carried the A.D.C. and the Marlowe through the war years, their latest production was remarkable. As Cleopatra, perhaps the only Shakespearian heroine better played by a woman than by a boy, a girl undergraduate gave a most powerful performance. The producer was vindictive in his treatment of Cleopatra, a Cressida grown more lethal with the years, but the text supports this view. The standard of speaking was expectedly high, and special praise must be given to the Dolabella, a small but crucial part; the Banquet was a triumph, and so was the miraculous little scene iii, Act IV.

The Lady from the Sea is below the Arts Theatre standard. It is one of Ibsen's most beautiful plays, but requires consummate skill from the producer even more than from the cast, for realism and imaginative symbolism are in it artfully but precariously mingled. Miss Veronica Turleigh looks and speaks well, but the production is hopelessly prosaic, and some of the acting is downright bad. Mr. Harold Scott's performance is what we shall remember with pleasure.

Alfred Stevens, Rodrigo Moynihan and Kenneth Martin, at the Leicester Galleries.

The cynicism with which the Royal Academy has for over a century neglected the aims which it was endowed to pursue is symbolised in its refusal to elect Alfred Stevens, the most deeply academic artist that this country has ever produced. How beautiful are almost all the drawings from the Drury Collection, now at the Leicester Galleries—and how seldom can we recognise in them an imaginative vision that is personal to the artist. Perhaps the most engaging are those early sketches in which Stevens, as it were in shorthand, noted a posture or a movement, for these give at least the illusion of a vitality that we miss in his more complete studies. One never feels that Stevens was faking; it became his second nature to look through Michelangelo's eyes, though he had none of Michelangelo's passion. His work may be "faultily faultless, icily regular," but it is never "splendidly null." A rewarding exhibition.

Mr. Moynihan remains so far Eustonian as to work in a low key, averting his brush from the primary colours. But he lays his paint on with gusto, and he allows his imagination freedom to play with such a subject as Ulysses and Nausicaa. He is one of the very few contemporary artists who can make a portrait that is both a likeness and a pleasure to the eye. The lady in a mantilla is seen with uncommon trenchancy. But the most covetable pictures are two Still Lifes, one with a melon, another with a flagon. Mr. Kenneth Martin's pastels reveal intelligent study of the great Impressionists. They are accomplished and agreeable but not so personal as nowadays, perhaps mistakenly, we have come to expect pictures to be. Again an academic artist, in the best sense of the word.



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THE MOVIES

"Hitler Lives?" at Warner's

"A Defeated People," at the Tivoli

"Justice Comes to Germany," March of Time

"The Corn is Green," at Warner's

The three films about Germany have an urgency in common, and this is strange to come across when for months at a time the cinemas go free of any contact with affairs. Food, for example: you would think that the screen, used to instruct and indoctrinate soldiers during the war, could contribute something vivid, topical and helpful on that subject. But does it? No; the newsreel theatres are still busy persuading us that crime didn't pay in Chicago in 1935. Wonderful irresponsibility! Politics—leave them to the newspapers. Discussion—enough of that on the wireless already. World problems—well, they aren't exactly box-office, are they? So, despite M.O.I. and March of Time, the cinema preserves its out-of-dateness like a dowry; and yet no other medium has wider or more powerful resources for stimulating the sense of reality.

Hitler Lives? is an impassioned, not to say ranting, onslaught on our indifference about Germany. It takes roughly the Vansittart point of view—these Germans have done it before, they'll do it again if you don't wake up—and it rams home its angry rhetoric with images that stir and shock as could no newspaper article. It is, in fact, an extremely effective piece of journalism, put together from newsreels, which drew applause at the press show. No attempt is made to suggest what should be done with the Germans, but we are warned, and it can hardly be denied that the warning is necessary.

The M.O.I. film at the Tivoli is less emphatic and more descriptive. Here are impressions of a people in defeat: sullen misery on most of the faces, the fox-holes under the ruins, the homeless wandering, the crushed towns and twisted bridges. Some of these scenes of desolation have an arresting beauty. (The director is Humphrey Jennings, although his name nowhere appears, I think, among the titles.) Against the two million underground Nazis of *Hitler Lives?* one might set the same number of lost men and women looking for their relatives in *A Defeated People.* We are given glimpses, more hopeful, of children's schools in the British zone. That is the hope; but how many of us would trust it without an international bomber force empowered to strike? The new March of Time, with a welcome recovery after last month's survey of English films, depicts the reintroduction of justice in Germany and the trial, before a U.S. military court, of a Nazi accused of shooting down unarmed prisoners of war.

The Corn is Green—I missed seeing Mr. Emlyn Williams's play—has many positive merits. First, there's Miss Bette Davis giving an excellent performance as a resolute English lady who starts a school in a Welsh mining village of the Nineties. Then, the theme of a young miner with a gift for poetry and learning who is hauled out of the pit and shoved towards an Oxford scholarship is developed with feeling and dramatic skill. One remembers a number of scenes—Miss Davis dangling before a bovine Squire the temptation of patronage, the Cockney servant-girl getting herself seduced by the young miner, the great examination day—and all through the dialogue maintains a lively idiom. This film, in fact, has genuine material and "goes" remarkably well. Its faults are the conventionally pretty sets, the well-drilled opera choruses in the background, and a growing tendency on the part of the author—at least, I suppose the tendency is his—to make all the characters more plummy as the plot unravels. The last probably comes off better in the theatre than on a screen. However, these aren't unbearable faults, and one enjoys the piece, while wishing at moments that it would do a little more than glow. Miss Davis, by the way, "introduces" two young players, John Dall and Joan Lorring, both of whom have talent.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

COMMUNISM AND DEMOCRACY

SIR,—In your issue this week, you sigh for the "co-operation" of Yalta. Capitulation would surely be the more appropriate word. At Yalta the disastrous arrangements were made which have resulted, so inexorably, in the present European tragedy. The Atlantic Charter was thrown bodily and cynically out of the window. Frontiers were drawn without a shadow of geographical or ethnical justification. Vast populations were condemned to forcible deportation. And the specific provision that the food surplus of Eastern Germany was not to be used to make up the food deficit of the rest of Germany, including Austria, ensured that millions of people would live on the border-line of starvation, without the addition of a world food shortage. To-day we reap the inevitable consequences of our folly (to use no harsher word), in terms of human suffering. I was in the United States at the time of Yalta; but I can recall no voice of protest on either side of the Atlantic, save that of Mr. Aneurin Bevan.

Having already abandoned every principle for which we had fought the war, it is not surprising that, at San Francisco, we found ourselves without convictions, and without a foreign policy.

Mr. Molotov had both. While we chattered, he shored up the Eastern *bloc* in Europe, took what he wanted from Manchuria, dropped the iron curtain, and inserted the veto clause in the Charter of the United Nations. He found the Western democracies impotent and divided. In these circumstances, it was easy for him to run through their broken ranks, and kick goal after goal. No small part of our subsequent, and increasing, irritation with the U.S.S.R. is due to the instinctive resentment of a man who suffers from a paralysis of indecision watching someone else, who knows precisely what he wants, getting it.

Where do we go from here? The Western democracies still believe in certain principles, including individual freedom, open diplomacy, majority decisions, and minority rights, which the Russians recognise but do not share. They have also an objective which is identical with that of the Soviet Government—security. It is essential to devise a policy which, although based on these principles, will at the same time convince the Russians that it is designed, no less than their own, to achieve this common goal.

What has been done cannot be undone. The Russian spheres of influence, the frontiers already drawn, the deportations, the veto clause—all must now be accepted. But we can, and must, say that the creation and economic development of a Western European *bloc* is essential to our own security and prosperity. Failure to form such a *bloc* was indeed the main cause of the outbreak of the second world war, and of the near-defeat of the Western democracies. The need for it to-day is greater than ever before. For nothing is more certain than that, flanked by the tremendous aggregations of political and economic strength represented by a federated Soviet Union and a federated United States, the comparatively small nations of Western Europe cannot hope for any kind of survival as isolated units.

So far as Germany is concerned, Professor G. D. H. Cole hits the nail firmly on the head. Eastern Germany is now—irretrievably—in the Russian Zone. Western Germany, including an internationalised Ruhr, should be incorporated in the Western *bloc.* There is no conceivable reason why such a *bloc* should ever constitute a threat to Russian security; or why the Russians should not participate in the direction of the Ruhr industries, and the use of their products. The present policy of limiting production in a world of scarcity borders on insanity.

What are the alternatives? First, anarchy—

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political and economic—in Western Europe, which would pave the way for a renewed attempt to impose unification upon the European economy by force or the threat of it. Second, the gradual emergence of two, and only two, competing world *blocs*, one based on the rigid collectivism of Soviet Russia, the other on the free knockabout capitalism of the United States, culminating in a struggle for world power.

The case for a third and balancing *bloc* which, by pursuing a policy of deliberately planned economic expansion designed to achieve social security, full employment, and a rising standard of life, would steer a middle course between the extremes of collectivism and individualism is overwhelming.

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that a fatalistic acceptance of the prevailing doctrine that the interests of Western democracy and of Russian Communism are so violently opposed that an ultimate clash is inevitable, is a counsel of despair. We have much to learn from each other in easier times, when contact has been re-established. But it should also be realised that the underlying struggle in Europe to-day is no longer between Socialism and Capitalism, but between Social Democracy and Communism; and that this struggle can be resolved only by a *modus vivendi* satisfactory to both, or a third world war. The best way of ensuring the final catastrophe of the latter is for us to pursue the negative policy, based on fear and an invincible reluctance to face unpalatable facts, which used to be called appeasement. ROBERT BOOTHBY

[We must point out that this journal strongly disapproved many details of the Yalta agreement but cited it because it was an occasion of Big Three agreement.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THE POSITION IN FRANCE

SIR,—In your issue of February 2nd, "Critic" wrote "France would not be hungry if it were not badly administered and politically divided." More than a month later the same words could be written with equal truth. But is France hungry? It would be more correct to say that nearly one-half of France at least of rural France, is gorging itself at the expense of the other, and larger, half.

Rations for most necessities are much less generous than in Britain. There is no milk or butter ration available for healthy adults. Bread is of fairly good quality and the allowance for an adult is 300 grammes, more than nine ounces, per day, with a further allowance for manual workers. Potatoes also are rationed, and an announcement is made in the press when a distribution is about to be made; there has been none since January. On the other hand, macaroni is distributed at the rate of one kilogramme per month, and occasionally there is an allocation of lentils of half a pound. The meat ration is irregular; 100 grammes, about three ounces, is distributed once, maybe twice, a month, and *charcuterie*—all-meat sausage, potted head, etc.—adds to this by about 200 grammes a month. Rather less than four ounces of cheese are given each month, and last month the sugar ration was increased from one pound to two pounds for the month. There is a quarter of a pound of coffee per month, but virtually no tea. A very inferior type of margarine—most people seem to make soap with it—and 400 grammes of poor quality cooking oil, complete the monthly allowance of fats. And if the Frenchman is still hungry after he has used his month's ration, he can buy as much bean flour and maize meal as he wants. Green vegetables are scarce. One hears tales of plenty in neighbouring regions, but decrees seemingly forbid inter-regional exchange of commodities. The Black Market flourishes, and while the poor worker is hard put to it to eke out an existence, hotels and restaurants have plentiful supplies of good things which they offer blatantly to their patrons. You can buy as much butter here as you will at 1,000 francs a kilo, and big joints of meat at ten shillings a pound; there is cream at I know not how much, and coffee at about ten shillings per pound. People talk quite openly of their purchases on the Black Market. Poor peasants whom I knew six years ago are now wealthy men. During the "occupation" it was commendable to cause sabotage of the enemy's rationing system, but now the habit has become engraved deeply in the commercial practice of the country. It goes far beyond food, and the building trade and the petrol industry are heavily tainted. Legally building can take place only to replace war damage but new houses are being constructed for all to see, in the luxury class. As for petrol, only last week it was announced that motor traffic was to be free, so that all who wished could use a car. A basic ration of four gallons a month was spoken of. However, this Order has been revoked and it is still necessary to obtain a permit to use a car, and there is usually the allowance of four gallons a month petrol, at about the same price as in England. On the other hand, there is plenty of petrol available on the Black Market at about a pound a gallon.

People accept the position without apparently doing anything to alter it. It is true that spirited articles appear repeatedly in the newspapers, and the first time that one sees one, one is apt to say "Ah, now at last something will be done about it." But nothing *is* done, and the evil goes on. A Frenchman said to me the other day "Ce qui manque le plus en France aujourd'hui, c'est l'opinion publique."

C. M.

TERRACES AT REGENT'S PARK

SIR,—The eloquent and well-reasoned review by Raymond Mortimer of John Summerson's book on *Georgian Architecture* unfortunately fails to base itself on the chief facts and arguments for the retention of the Regent's Park terraces. His pleading against their replacement by "mountainous flats" is sound, and he reasonably depicts their aesthetic and historic values.

But he is wrong in suggesting that they "lend themselves easily to conversion to maisonettes and flats." Only luxury housing at fantastic levels of rent could make that an economic possibility. Mr. Mortimer misses the two reasons of public policy which alone can—and probably will—justify the retention of the terraces. The first is their repair and use by Government departments. The devotion of such a superb site overlooking the park, and such glorious and historic buildings, to the housing of bureaucrats (however admirable and necessary the latter may be) could be justified by three arguments: first, that the great Government departments alone can devote money and labour to-day to the rescue of the terraces; secondly, that the terraces are more suitable for such use than for private housing, and they would thus release flats at present held by Ministerial staffs; and thirdly, that such tenancy by the Ministries must be for a short period only—say, seven years—to recoup them for their expenditure and to enable the terraces to be preserved for public use after that period has elapsed.

This brings me to the second and conclusive argument for their retention. Those terraces not taken over by the Ministries—and all the terraces after the seven-year period suggested above—are admirably suited as headquarters for learned societies, trade unions, and all kinds of national bodies devoted to social and cultural purposes. It is proposed that a national musical centre shall be built in Park Square, but this could be only one of a magnificent series of cultural headquarters sited in the great terraces overlooking the Royal Park. This could be the "Whitehall" of British learning and art.

The ground and first floors of the terraces are suitable for adaptation to offices, libraries, assembly halls, club-rooms and dining halls. The basements, when the ugly, dilapidated and unnecessary mews behind are cleared away, will be airy and well-lighted enough for fine kitchens. The two upper floors can be adapted for hostel accommodation.

Several purposes can then be served by these historic terraces, giving London in the process a new characteristic that she has never yet possessed. Such cultural and social bodies as I have described above—

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whether, for example, a learned society, or the W.E.A. or national trade union club (both of which certainly need rehousing)—would thus acquire a splendid national headquarters with accommodation for visiting delegations. From scientists to trade union leaders, our visitors from the provinces and overseas would receive accommodation in a central and splendid situation and in a historic setting. Certain terraces, or parts of them, might similarly be set aside for official Governmental hospitality, thus avoiding the humiliation we lately suffered, when the Government had to issue pathetic appeals to private householders to entertain the United Nations delegates. One has only to mention the haphazard, crowded and often obsolete hotel accommodation offered to distinguished visitors by both Government and private bodies today, in scattered and sometimes sordid parts of London, to grasp what an enhancement of our great Capital this measure would be. The authorities of London University—especially of University College and Bedford College—would doubtless also be warmly interested in the use of terraces for hostel accommodation for their staff and students. The nearness of the terraces to the proposed University Precinct makes them a natural academic centre.

These uses, which certainly constitute good grounds of public policy, have been put forward by the St. Pancras Labour Party, and were laid in evidence before the Gorell Committee by the St. Pancras Borough Council, which adopted them without party divisions. They would, if adopted by the Government, create something new and fine for London, fully justifying the spending of considerable sums of public money for the rescue of the terraces. They do not contradict, but rather reinforce, the reasonable and passionate arguments of Raymond Mortimer, and they deserve the closest public study and attention, for they would incorporate one of the finest examples of London's past into the living and active future of our great city. ERIC COOK,

Chairman, S.-W. St. Pancras Divisional Labour Party, and St. Pancras Borough Labour Party.
7a Fitzroy Square, W.1.

FOOD RESERVE

SIR,—I was delighted to read your support for the rapidly growing demand that, to prevent imminent starvation, we should place at the disposal of UNRRA and of Military Government in Germany a substantial tonnage from our existing food stocks. But you are in error when you add "How large these are is (unjustifiably we think) concealed by the Ministry of Food." It is true that Sir Ben Smith refused month after month to disclose the figure, with the plea that he was on a seller's market, but the information was at last given by Mr. Attlee. He stated that our stocks at the end of 1945 amounted to 4,200,000 tons, against 3,000,000 at the outbreak of war. Dr. Summerskill said a few days ago that there had been a reduction by the end of February of 650,000 tons, but hinted that it was a seasonal reduction only. According to Mr. James Byrnes, our normal pre-war stocks were 1,500,000 tons. These are "global" figures: we do not yet know, as we ought to know, how they are made up.

"Save Europe Now" has been advocating that our stocks should be reduced to the 3,000,000 tons which we held at the outbreak of war, when we faced the danger of blockade and U-boat attack. That would still leave us with twice the tonnage thought sufficient for normal peacetime distribution. Even those who insist that "our first duty is to ourselves" can hardly object that the risk is an undue one, when the alternative is the misery of starvation for millions.

VICTOR GOLLANCZ,

Chairman, for "Save Europe Now."
14, Henrietta Street, W.C.2.

GLASSHOUSES

SIR,—Colin Giller's ingenuous contention, in relation to the recent Aldershot Detention Barracks disturbances (NEW STATESMAN & NATION, March 9th) that a civilian may be excused for considering general (i.e. civil) crimes as more serious than military crimes cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged.

It will, I think, be found that the large majority of the inmates of the Aldershot Detention Barracks were incarcerated for crimes committed on active service during the war; conditions under which even the civilian crime of murder may pale in comparison with desertion. The former, however, tragic, is directed against an individual, the latter may have the most serious effect on operations and is a crime against the State.

As a civilian, recently released after five years commissioned service with the R.A.F., I have a lively recollection of the immense expenditure of time, man-power and public money involved in bringing to trial by court-martial the foolish or anti-social individuals for whom Colin Giller would now, by implication, seek to arouse sympathy.

A case may well exist for reconsideration of military sentences and for renewed investigation into the conditions prevailing in military detention barracks, but I suggest that sympathy with the recent "strikers" is superfluous and misplaced; it should be reserved for their dependants, penalised by loss of pay! R. C. NOEL-JOHNSON

35, Wilton Grove, Wimbledon, London, S.W.19.

PEN AND BRASSHAT

SIR,—When I joined the Army in 1940, to be seen with a copy of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION was to be labelled "Red," regarded as "a queer bloke who wants watchin'," avoided as one of "those Left-Wing upstarts," and yet in a recent Divisional publication here in Northern Italy I notice that your journal is recommended for Unit Information Rooms.

Does this mean that the pen is really mightier than the brasshat?

C.M.F. JOSEPH WELBANK

COUNTRY BUSES

SIR,—Mr. Leonard Woolf complains of the irrational inefficiency of the London bus services, but compared with those operating in the country they are, as he himself suggests, "like the heavenly bodies."

I was one of seven people who recently boarded a bus at Bideford which was clearly marked "Clovelly," only to find that it was actually bound for Barnstaple, which is in the opposite direction. When we got on to it, it was standing immediately behind another bus marked "Clovelly" which was full up and standing at the stopping place marked "Clovelly." The front indicator bore the legend "Duplicate" and, though we had no idea of this until we had got off the bus the rear indicator was subsequently altered to read "Duplicate."

On complaining at the bus office, we were told that the indicator meant nothing and that if the bus was not standing exactly at the stop marked "Clovelly" it was "our own fault."

Shortly afterwards, I saw a bus marked "Bideford" and asked where that was going. I was told "Torrington." I asked, "How is one expected to know that?" and the answer was, "Because it is standing at the Torrington stop." The stop marked "Torrington" was some 40 feet *behind* the bus!

It is not only in Devon that this sort of thing happens. In Herefordshire, for example, it is usual (though not invariable) to find bus indicators showing the place from which the bus has come, instead of that to which it is proceeding, while the utter confusion in Anglesey and North Wales beggars description. CHARLES ESAM-CARTER

Slade House, Bideford, Devon.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

SIR,—I am writing the life of John Martin, 1789—1854, the painter of *Belshazzar's Feast*, etc. I should be much obliged if anyone possessing letters or other information of him or his works would communicate with me. THOMAS BALSTON

Holt End, Ashford Hill, Newbury, Berks.

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The Observer. 15s.

BOOKS IN GENERAL

N enthusiastic welcome must be given to *cton, the Formative Years*, by David Mathew Eyre and Spottiswoode, 10*s.* 6*d.*). Not only is is the first book to treat with any fullness its portant and fascinating subject, but the author equipped for his exacting task with uncommon arning, candour, good sense and liveliness of yle.

Acton is still sometimes thought of as merely e most erudite of professors, a man so pre-cupied with assembling information that he died efore writing any major work. *The Cambridge odern History* lies heavy on him, suggesting its mausoleum austerity that its editor held story to be only a science. But Acton was in e first place a political moralist. His integrity d him in his essays to a sometimes regrettably rupulous concentration upon evidence. (And r this reason the general reader should first ap-oach him through his letters, which are rich lapidary judgments.) This fault might have dis-ured, had he lived to write it, that *History of eedom* which ranks among the most to be mented of unfulfilled projects. But he would, believe, have at least aimed at producing a work art as well as a masterpiece of scholarship and exemplar of morality. And here I may inter-late a recommendation of a lecture by the aster of Trinity (*History and the Reader*, Cam-idge Press, 2*s.* 6*d.*), which renews most per-asively the author's old plea for history as an t and which shows why such history is the ost educative of human studies.

Bishop Mathew's book conducts us through ton's life from his birth in 1834 to the year 1862 hen he became intimate with Mr. Gladstone. forms, as it were, a necessary and richly orna-ented pedestal for the statue of the mature inker, which, we are happy to learn, is to follow om the same hand. Between 1862 and his death 1902 Acton was driven, alike by external ents such as the Vatican Council and by un-lenting deductions from principles he had opted earlier, to a position that cannot easily be und compatible with his no less profound faith the Catholic Church. While he condemned ewman as a splendid Sophist, he left his own sition ambiguous. I have not theological arning enough to be sure that in anything he ever blished he was technically a heretic. But his spect for liberty and for the sanctity of human e was so unqualified as to place him far from e mind of the Church. He believed the Papacy be guilty of "systematic sin." He entertained aversion for Newman, because the Oratorian s an avowed admirer of St. Charles Borromeo, ho "wrote a letter for the purpose of causing a w Protestants to be murdered." He even be-ved that, by reason only of their opinions, all suits and Dominicans lived in mortal sin. At the me time he seems never to have been disquieted more ordinary temptations against Faith. If he d been excommunicated—and only prudence, e suspects, prevented the Vatican from sub-ting him to this penalty—the privation of the craments would have been an appalling blow. mmunion with Rome, he declared, was dearer him than life. It is most necessary to the pres-e of Catholics that these difficult matters should treated by a member of their Church. itherto the reputation of Acton has been allowed depend chiefly on editors outside the Roman edience. The death of Mr. R. A. L. Smith has prived us of a Catholic scholar intent upon a udy of Acton's opinions. But now, by an act tardy wisdom, the biography has been en-usted to an historian whose orthodoxy is as impeachable as his integrity.

The singular point of view that I have tried summarise was no doubt encouraged by ton's devotion to Mr. Gladstone, of whose rely intellectual powers he entertained an tonishingly high estimate. But the origin of s thought is to be found in his ancestry and bringing. No other great professor, Bishop Mathew points out, came from a world so completely unprofessorial. It was one of his early difficulties indeed to get himself treated seriously by historians not half so well equipped. Acton, moreover, was superlatively cosmopolitan. His paternal grandfather, half French by birth, became the favourite of Queen Caroline of the Two Sicilies and Prime Minister of Naples. He married his niece, whose mother was German (and it is amusing to learn that Nelson's chaplain read the marriage service from the Prayer Book over this union which to Anglican eyes was incestuous). The historian's maternal grandfather was the Duke of Dalberg, a Rhinelander who had become a peer of France, and who was married to a Brignole-Sale from Genoa. As far as I can work it out, Acton was six parts German, four parts Italian, three parts French and three parts English. His father died when he was three, and three years later his mother married Lord Leveson (son of Lady Bessborough's friend and grandson of Duchess Georgiana), who as "Pussy" Granville became so eminent in the Liberal Party. The boy was brought up, a baronet, on the family estate in Shropshire; by an aunt married to a Throckmorton and through his education at Oscott, he became involved in the particular and secluded world of the old English Catholic gentry. Three Cambridge colleges having refused him admission because of his religion, he went to study in Munich with the great historian Döllinger. Next he went to America; and to Moscow with his stepfather, the Queen's representative at the coronation of Alexander II. He was already forming an enormous library in order to commence historian. In 1859 he was returned to the House of Commons, where he scarcely broke silence. And in the same year he found himself editor and co-proprietor of a Catholic journal, *The Rambler*, to which he contributed numerous reviews, overwhelming in their assured erudition. He was only twenty-five. Does any figure require the biographer to paint a more varied and panoramic background?

Bishop Mathew has risen finely to his task. A pleasing taste for the picturesque sometimes leads him into over-exuberance. Thus, in the authoress of *Le récit d'une sœur* he finds:

> a myrtle-wreathed thick sentiment which cloaked a preoccupation with a curious short-circuited morbidity; a cushioned air of mortal sadness.

Such lapses are rare. And my only serious complaint is that the book is too short for the ground it has to cover. The Bishop, for instance, might advantageously have dwelt more fully on the Neapolitan career of General Acton. "It is very natural," he says, "that the General's character should be found repugnant to Lord Acton's notions." This seems an understatement. The General represented what Acton abominated. And I have been told that any mention of Nelson was always peculiarly disagreeable to the great historian because his own grandfather was associated in the treacherous execution of Caracciolo. The description of the German background, again, brilliant though it is, might advantageously be longer, because most of us know so little about Josephism and Febronianism and the resultant tone of Central European Catholicism. This is important, we are told, because it helps to explain why in Acton's thought "the corporate liturgical life of the Church plays little part."

The picture of the old Catholic environment is masterly, and I wish I could quote more of it.

> There the old phalanx stood, the red carpet laid for the Cardinal on the hall steps at Talacrre, the parties gathering for the Twelfth, the silver cleaning and the cellars stirring, the young girls gossiping about their *prétendants*. The ladies stood ready in their crinolines, preparing to curtsey to His Eminence . . . Upstairs the red lamp winked before the Spanish crucifix, and its light just defined the new work of devotion on the *prie-dieu*, the pages neatly marked with lace-fringed pictures. The air was laden with a warm, secluded piety. In the gun-room the servants worked away. It was not the place for John Dalberg Acton.

Acton's wealth came not only from English funds and lands but from "estates and *rentes* in the Electorate of Trier, Napoleonic subventions made to Dalbergs and that haul, not large by old Whig standards, which his grandfather Acton had gouged out of the Crown of the Two Sicilies." The historian, his biographer tells us with gentle irony, had "all the rich man's abhorrence of self-seeking." And his wealth accounts in part for what one may think his greatest weakness: "In his writings the economic motive is consistently ignored."

"The establishment of liberty for the realisation of moral duties"—such was the ideal upon which Acton's formative years converged, an ideal in which a Whiggery purged of cynicism was married to a Catholicism critical of current authority. It has been well said that Catholics distrusted him because he was a Liberal, and Liberals because he was a Catholic. Let us hear him on nationality: "The co-existence of several nations under the same State is a test, as well as the best security of its freedom." Again:

> Nationality does not aim either at liberty or prosperity, either of which it sacrifices to the imperative necessity of making the nation the mould and measure of the State. Its course will be marked with material as well as moral ruin in order that a new invention may prevail over the works of God and the interests of mankind.

Federalism seemed to him one of the best guarantees of freedom. "It is better to be a citizen of a humble commonwealth in the Alps than a subject of the superb autocracy that overshadows half Europe and Asia." Acton's distrust of equality cannot be dismissed as merely reactionary. He followed Tocqueville in believing that a tendency towards absolutism was inherent in the search for political equality, and he hated nothing so much as that plebiscitary dictatorship which he had seen prevail under Napoleon III (and which for the last twenty years has poisoned our lives). "All liberty exists *in radice* in the preservation of an inner sphere exempt from State power." And this conviction led to one of his most memorable sayings: "It is bad to be oppressed by a minority, but it is worse to be oppressed by a majority,"—a majority being not only less easily destroyed but more unescapable and intense in its tyranny. "Every class" again, he declared, "every class is unfit to govern." "No one agrees with me," Acton declared, and his isolation continues.

But if he were alive to-day he might well recognise that capitalism, always base in its ethic, had become also obsolete in its technique. In any case, the more convinced we are that capitalism is moribund, the more urgent it becomes to consider how liberty of thought can be preserved. For on such liberty any possibility of improving society chiefly depends. (A State that suppresses any new hypotheses—which are usually distasteful, as, for instance, in Freud—strikes at the idea of progress.) I take it that the wish to preserve such liberty marks, even more than a hatred of violence, the distinction between Social Democrats and Communists. Whatever powers over industry are needed by the State, it must never be conceded control of press and publishing. Acton, therefore, remains one of the political thinkers most imperatively demanding our attention. His loathing of persecution, his belief in the sacredness of human life and his insistence upon the absolute claims of morality place him high above Macaulay, Carlyle, Froude and all the other historians of his time. Bishop Mathew has shown how exceptional a variety of circumstances combined to produce this monumental man. And with one final quotation let me pay homage to his teaching—it comes from an imaginary portrait expressing the ideal he set himself:

> He would have felt dishonest if he had unduly favoured people of his own country, his own religion or his own party, or if he had entertained the shadow of a prejudice against those who were against them . . .

A man's respect for Acton will depend upon the extent to which he accepts this ideal.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE SOVIET ECONOMY

The Development of the Soviet Economic System. By ALEXANDER BAYKOV. *Cambridge University Press.* 30s.

Opportunities for serious study, at an academic level, of the economic system of the U.S.S.R. have hitherto been lamentably scarce in this country. With some notable but rare exceptions, the Slavonic departments of universities have been preoccupied with the traditional type of language-cum-literature teaching; and such history as has found a place in them has been apt to stop before the year 1917. Libraries have been lacking in up-to-date material; and for research departments and institutions the subject has generally been a closed book. One can hardly be surprised that misinformation should have flourished as it so notoriously did in the pre-war period. Fortunately the position is now beginning to show a few signs of improvement; and of this improvement this work of Dr. Baykov's, undertaken for the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, is some indication.

Dr. Baykov was for many years a collaborator of Professor Prokopovitch at his Russian Economic Research Centre in Prague: an institution well-known for the anti-Soviet tendency of its publications. Dr. Baykov also lectured at the Czech Technical University at Prague. In a frank and disarming preface to this work, the author confesses that his specialised studies over a number of years have forced upon him the conclusion that he and his former colleagues were frequently wrong in their estimation of current economic events and policies in the U.S.S.R., because "these events and measures were considered in isolation and not in association with the general course of development of the entire national economy of the U.S.S.R." He accordingly sets the present study in an historical framework, and divides his record of the leading events in Soviet economic life into four main periods: the period up to the end of the civil war; the period of the N.E.P.; the "period of extensive industrialisation" up to 1935; and finally what he terms "the period of intensive endeavour to improve the country's economy and economic system." In each of these four periods the main developments in the several spheres of industry, agriculture, labour, trade, public finance, credit and money are exhaustively described.

The result is the most comprehensive and informed work of reference on this subject that we have yet had in this country. Its 450-odd pages are rich in detail, much of which has hitherto been unavailable to an English reader. Although he has been absent from his country of origin since the civil war period, the author is unusually well-equipped with knowledge for his task; and the completeness of his factual record is only limited by the poverty of research-material available in this country upon Soviet economics. In his attempt to be objective, he has reduced his own comment to a minimum; so that in many places the result may prove too severely documentary for the general reader, who will not always find that the questions he (or she) is inclined to ask receive an answer. For example, Dr. Baykov advisedly does not enter into any of the issues in the discussions around the policy of industrialisation on the eve of the First Five-Year-Plan, nor does he offer any judgment on changes in standards of life (pointing out in this connection that "when radical changes alter the social and cultural conditions of life of the great masses of the population, a simple index of real wages loses any significance as an objective measure of changes in the standard of life.") But there are also some questions which economists may ask (correctly or mistakenly) that do not receive any direct answer in this study; and there are certainly places where one could have wished that the author had analysed and generalised his data rather more. One has the feeling from time to time that the picture is given too little light and shade. This is not to say, however, that a sense of relevance and of selection is lacking in the composition of the book. The method of presentation certainly illuminates many dark places. One would particularly recommend to the attention both of the general and of the specialist reader the very full and clear account of such matters as the measures taken against the *kulaks* and the collectivisation "drive" in 1929 and 1930, which sorts out much that has been confused; and the way in which the ruling importance of the *marketable surplus* of grain in the changing agrarian policies of the 1920s is explained.

There is considerable wealth of tabulated information in statistical form scattered about the volume (one might mention as a detail, however, that an estimate of the physical volume of imports and exports is offered us on page 265 without comment, which on the face of it suggests that the terms of trade moved *in favour* of U.S.S.R. in the years 1930–2). There is also at the end an impressive 16-page bibliography of Russian material, inspection of which serves to emphasise the poverty of research libraries in this country within this important field. In summarising the results of the industrial changes in those dozen pre-war years of great endeavours, the author cautiously states that,

> In spite of shortcomings and difficulties, a working system of industrial management, satisfactory on the whole, was created, and the current difficulties in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of war were not fundamental, but only such as could be solved by technical adjustments.

In conclusion, he expresses the opinion that:

> Study of the developments taking place in the U.S.S.R. can . . . provide a wealth of instructive material to serious students of the economic and sociological problems of the present day.

and again:

> Study of all the aspects of the planning technique elaborated in the U.S.S.R. during the last decade could provide extremely fruitful and instructive data for the revision of the many theoretical conceptions which still pervade academic and statistical literature.

MAURICE DOBB

CAESARIAN DEMOCRACY

Napoleon III. By ALBERT GUÉRARD. *Oxford University Press.* 20s.

Mr. Guérard is a French historian who has devoted thirty years of his life to the study of the era of Napoleon III. He began his researches with every Republican prejudice against the man and the regime; but as he proceeded his contempt and hostility became mitigated by increasing sympathy and respect. The result is the present biography in the Harvard *Makers of Modern Europe* series, in which sympathy for the human failings of Louis Napoleon has led the historian into an attempt to condone the regime of that shop-soiled Cæsar.

Most people who follow the career of Louis Napoleon recognise it as pathetic rather than sympathetic. This kind, polite gentleman, with his eye for the main chance, his enthusiasm for engineering works and his private relapses into self-indulgence, would have made a successful chairman for a speculative concern in the City; where he would have competed with similar undistinguished persons on equal terms. Unfortunately his name was Bonaparte and he grew up in a romantic epoch. He became obsessed with his Destiny; and gambled for power, not on the Stock Exchange, but in French politics. When the 100 to 1 chance at last came off and there he was at the winning post, his situation was absurdly unenviable. He had achieved his Destiny; he had no idea what to do next, and he couldn't afford to make mistakes. (The curse of dictatorship is that if you take on all responsibility you can never shift any of the blame.) So he was obliged to become an enigma—the Sphinx of the Tuileries—and hope that France and Europe would construe his vacillations and contradictions as some inscrutable Machiavellian policy. His Destiny was that of a Pretender; and he had go on pretending to the last.

Mr. Guérard is not satisfied that this is th whole story. He would have us believe tha behind the poker face, Louis Napoleon stuck a consistent plan to achieve the freedom of Italy the peace of Europe and the establishment "Cæsarian democracy" in France; but that was dogged by bad luck, ill health and the cur of the Napoleonic legend. No new evidenc supports this view, which is reached by favour able interpretation of the known facts. Mr Guérard emphasises the good nature and dream idealism of his hero and glosses over his incor rigible pusillanimity. By contrast Bismarck' verdict may seem brutal but equally justified "from afar, something—close up, nothing. great misunderstood incompetence."

Whatever our opinion of Louis Napoleon as man, his regime presents a different and mor ticklish question. Enlightened despotism is no without advocates to-day, provided the illumina tion is one's favourite colour. What Mr. Guérar calls Cæsarian democracy claims its authority govern from the election of a single leader by free expression of the popular will in the form a plebiscite! That is the democratic part of After that you are saddled with Cæsar for ever He can hold more perfunctory plebiscites when ever he feels like it; but as he is now in contr of the entire machinery, there is no know instance of a Cæsarian plebiscite failing to prai Cæsar. Law, order and material prosperi follow in Cæsar's wake; and are supposed to sufficient compensation for the surrender of fre speech, the absence of effective criticism and th lack of political activity.

Mr. Guérard justifies Louis Napoleon's eleva tion to power by the plebiscite of 1848, when was elected President of the Republic by 5,400,00 votes against 1,400,000 for his closest riv General Cavaignac. Was this a genuine expres sion of popular opinion? Yes, because it wa against the Government in power, represented Cavaignac. (All elections which go against government are genuine expressions of popul opinion.) But what was the opinion expressed This raises a point which all politicians are cha of recognising—that a vote is ambiguous, and ma be evidence of what the voter dislikes but not what he likes. It is possible that the mandate the French electorate in December, 1848, was n *for* Louis Napoleon but *against* Cavaignac, th butcher of the Days of June, who had ruthless suppressed a popular rising with considerab bloodshed. This possibility seems to be confirme by the elections five months later for a ne Assembly. The old Republicans were defeate but the new majority was monarchist, most them Orleanists: the Bonapartists were a me handful. Mr. Guérard dismisses this phe omenon as a tortuous vote of confidence in th principle of authoritarian government, *i.e.* Lou Napoleon. In that case the voters were singular betrayed, as the parliamentary majority w frankly hostile to the Prince President; an their antagonism forced him into his *coup d'ét* to retain power. Even granting Mr. Guérar that the vote of 1848 was for Louis Napoleo we may surely object that he was elected to President of a Republic for four years—not found a hereditary Empire by means of a co *d'état*. Mr. Guérard offers a disingenuo exculpation. The people voted not for Lou Napoleon alone, but for the Napoleonic legen as well; and naturally that predicated a pe manent family dictatorship.

And so on. Mr. Guérard is ready to extenua anything for his thesis. The massacre aft the *coup d'état* was sheer bad luck—a trag accident. So it was. But why were panic troops parading the boulevards with ammunition on December 4th, 1851? In ca the public raised any objection to their se appointed dictator of two days' standing. Th Emperor's entourage is blamed both for th futile Mexican expedition and the 20 year occupation of Rome, which made nonsense y policy for a United Italy. But no one liged him to surround himself with fools and aves. The famous *L'Empire c'est la paix* oclamation of 1852, followed by three major uropean wars, needs some rectification: Mr. uérard falls back on the Napoleonic legend. Frenchman would have been contented thout *la gloire;* and the Emperor had to ovide occasions for acquiring it. Even the nsorship of the Press is twisted by Mr. Guérard o "with the exception of Hugo and Quinet, best writers under the "Tyranny" lived and oured at home in perfect freedom." Baudelaire Flaubert are presumably excluded from he best writers," as they were prosecuted. t the most disconcerting claim in the book is :—The essential point about Napoleon III is t he was a Socialist," on the strength of a mphlet that he wrote in prison and that he ce said so as a joke.

Further evidence is derived from his support co-operative societies and his toleration of des unions. The argument is so thin that may be forgiven for wondering whether the thor has some ulterior purpose besides writing tory. Constant references to current affairs the text show that Mr. Guérard is continually king over his shoulder at the present state of rope. The last sentences of his book have a phetic ring.

"The Constitution of 1852 would be for her ance] a better starting point than the Constitu- of 1875. And she would be fortunate indeed he found again, under such a regime, a leader h the unfailing gentleness, the quiet intellectual rage, the profound generosity, of Napoleon III."

En avant, de Gaulle? Or would Mr. Guérard efer Thorez?

RALPH PARTRIDGE

INTRODUCING DONNE

e Fantasticks: John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan. *By* W. S. SCOTT. *Westhouse.* 12s. 6d.

f this volume had appeared a year or two ago might have been dismissed as unnecessary: e were better anthologies of the kind already! -day they have sold out; the "long-felt need" for famous books, including *The Egoist*, rton's *Anatomy, Moby Dick, Pride and Preju-e*—and the Metaphysicals. There is a place, n, if only as a stop-gap, for Mr. Scott's *The ntasticks*. Our complaint must be that he n't done his work very skilfully.

The selection (seventy-four poems) will pass, though I don't understand the exclusion of Marvell, and we are given Donne without either of the Valedictions and Herbert without *The Collar* or *The Pearl*. (The purpose of the book, its author claims, is to introduce.) Still a good deal remains, the text is well printed, the decorations from the *Emblemata Diversorum Principum* of Typotius extend a pattern. But, with the best of intentions, Mr. Scott himself keeps dodging in and out, making the introductions. He is an enthusiast; he reels out jargon. "A seraph among men . . . lover of lovers, mystic of mystics, of a curiosity utterly insatiable, kinetic, energic . . ." This, barely recognisable, is Donne. Wouldn't it have been better if Donne had been left to introduce himself?

> I wonder by my troth, what thou and I
> Did, till we lov'd? . . .

But to whom do the following sentences refer?

> . . . a child's capacity for contemplation—for brooding happily, quietly and continuously on the sensation of being "at home, in his Father's house,"—satisfied, contented, fulfilled . . . [he] retained a sufficient portion of the pre-adolescent life-synthesis to enable him to succeed, after a long period of conflict, in attaining to a perfect integration . . . death, and death alone, could set him free from the agony of agonies . . .

Donne, again! But this time wholly lost in the whirl of Mr. Scott's adoration. Such extravagances, I'm afraid, make nonsense of their subject; and when Mr. Scott comes down from his life-perch to define metaphysical poetry he rather puts his foot in it:

> [There] is a certain quality which the poetry of them all has in common, difficult to describe because faint, evocative and distant . . .

(He can't surely, here, be thinking of Donne?)

> . . . a quality which for want of a more exact and descriptive word may be termed "loveliness" . . . It is the same rare quality—this loveliness—which haunts one in such passages as the last two stanzas of the "Ode to the Nightingale," or Milton's "Thick as autumnal leaves . . . in Vallombrosa," or Tennyson's "Far off things, and battles long ago;" a quality which finds its perfect expression in the unforgettable lines of Théodore de Banville, "Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupés" . . .

Well, obviously, a quality that finds its perfect expression in Banville can't be the distinctive quality of the Metaphysicals. All that Mr. Scott is trying to say, perhaps, is that Banville, Crashaw, Keats, Vaughan, Milton, Herbert, Tennyson and Donne have all enchanted him. But a critic must do more than exclaim.

I am not complaining of Mr. Scott's enthusiasm, which for the most part I share, but of the fact that his enthusiasms are so mixed. He passionately admires Donne, and at the same time he is looking for a "valid synthesis of life"; the two get clamped together. Some of his exhortations apply more fitly, I should have thought, to Coventry Patmore, whose poetry also, though remote from Donne's, interfuses sex with religion, and embraces the universe as a mistress (wife, in Patmore's case). Besides Patmore, the theme might be explored in Blake and a number of modern poets, with varying emphasis. These aren't, however, suitable wrappings for a book setting out the claims of the Metaphysicals: one of the first things Mr. Scott has to learn as a critic (a *Selected Verse and Prose of John Donne* is announced on the back of the present volume) is a passionate strictness of address.

G. W. STONIER

TANKS

Our Armoured Forces. By Lt.-General Sir Giffard Le Q. Martel, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. *Faber.* 21s.

General Martel's book, *Our Armoured Forces*, is remarkable for being the spontaneous record of every campaign of the second world war, written immediately "while it was still fresh in the mind" of a man who played an active part. He used every spare moment he could find, mostly during the long hours of his flights from one theatre of operations to another, to write this book, "entirely in the air"; certainly the most modern way a modern war leader could find to write a modern war book. For his subject he has chosen the most modern weapon of the beginning of the war: the tank.

General Martel is a specialised technician who has wide general knowledge; he has practical experience and he knows how to draw theoretical conclusions. His book will be especially appreciated by those whose comments on conceptions of war are entirely theoretical

Two distinct subjects are discussed in his book: the operations of the armoured forces during the second World War, and the way in which these forces were raised. Naturally, the author concentrates mostly on the British tanks, their advantages and their faults, but he also gives quite a lot of space to describing the Russian tanks and their organisation. He explains that it was numerical superiority in men, guns and

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tanks which made up for the lack of modern equipment and the consequent lower-grade technique from which the Russian Army suffered.

General Martel's most important idea on tank-organisation is the division of tanks into two classes: "the heavy infantry tank for the infantry role, and the faster and less heavily armoured tank for the cavalry role," whereas the Germans tried to use one class of tanks for both purposes.

This idea is right in principle, but the essential development of the tank-war seemed to tend more and more in the direction of the use of heavy tanks only. And General Martel himself realises this when he speaks of the "outstanding success of the infantry tank Matilda. A tank of this kind," he says, "which can resist the fire from the enemy anti-tank-guns produces a great moral effect on the enemy."

The early defeats of the Allies were caused to a great extent by having neglected the development of their heavy tanks, and only to a much smaller extent by the British and Russian lack of experience.

"For close fighting in the plains of Europe," Gen. Martel points out, "we should have been using the army tank brigades with their heavily armoured tanks. Unfortunately, Gen. Montgomery had said that he did not want any of this type of tank." It is interesting to note that only after Gen. Montgomery had gone back to England, did Gen. Alexander insist on having considerable numbers of heavily armoured Churchill tanks. "And"—Gen. Martel continues—"they were used with great success." As a result of Gen. Montgomery's attitude less weight was put on the development of the heavy tanks, and "in consequence, we found that we had nothing to pit against the German Tigers and Panthers in close and heavy fighting. And this delayed our operation by a month."

Much valuable time was lost, especially while the Air Force was still insufficient and undeveloped. But it is that particular period of the war which is the most interesting from Gen. Martel's point of view, for the highest test of generalship in the winning of battles with inferior strength. Later on, in France and Italy, the Allies had very strong tank and artillery forces, and an almost unlimited support from the air, and far less still was required.

One of the most important factors of this war, Gen. Martel maintains, is the co-operation of weapons. And the battle of Arras, where tanks, infantry and guns co-operated closely, was the outstanding example. Such a battle never took place during the Russian campaign.

The co-operation of different weapons is undoubtedly decisive, but it does not appear to me as a specifically new idea. The principle of co-operation of weapons had already been adopted in the 4th century B.C., during the war between Athens and Macedonia. The advantage of the latter at the time of King Philip II was the co-operation of infantry, archers and cavalry.

The new idea of the second World War seems to be less the co-operation of arms than the autonomous use of tanks in tactical formations, which was later on adopted by the Air Force. Gen. Martel was, no doubt, right when he said that "close co-operation of all arms was the key word of German training with armoured forces, but the new and striking idea was the creation of the Panzer Divisions."

What are the actual lessons for the future in Gen. Martel's book? It is essential to draw lessons for a future war from the war that has ended. In a future war atomic energy would play a decisive part, and this book has naturally no direct relationship with that subject. But the parallel is in the preparation. Tanks were an Allied invention as was the atomic bomb in this war. Yet, the Allies were nearly beaten by their own invention; they must not be beaten by their own atomic bombs.

A slow start, like that of the second World War, is out of the question at a time when rockets and atomic devices can decide the issue of a war very rapidly. Therefore, preparation is the most essential factor to prevent a potential enemy from declaring war. False economy is dangerous and suicidal, and it seems entirely unbelievable that such an economy was practised, especially by the rich nations. Economy in heavy tanks saved a few million pounds in peacetime, but cost billions of pounds during the war.

To think ahead and to spend the right money at the right time are the main conditions of winning a war, and Gen. Martel's idea of forming a tank parliament could be translated into the formation of an atom parliament. England has always been better prepared towards the end of a war than at the beginning, and that this should not happen again is the main theme of General Martel's book.

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OUT OF THE HURLY-BURLY

First Visit to England, and Other Memorie

By AUSTIN CLARKE. *Williams and Norga* 5*s*.

This book contains sixteen prose essays writte by the Irish poet during the war, while he w living in Eire. The visit to England does n amount to much, and one would not learn fro this book that Mr. Clarke has lived in our count for many years with a marked effect upon h affections. The first essay is merely an accou of how on his first train journey down from Live pool his money was won from him by a gang card sharpers, and the reader is left with the infe ence that "this is England."

However, that should not blind an Englis reader to the unusual beauty and sensibility Mr. Clarke's prose, and the originality of th scenes, contacts, and emotions which it convey The emotions are conditioned largely by th survival of fears and taboos carried over fro his schoolboy experiences in the Jesuit scho where James Joyce also was educated. It mu have been an alarmingly efficient place, for has sealed both these artists with its symbol Mr. Clarke still sees life in terms of those symbo of the Catholic faith, and their minatory burde weighs upon his senses and his spirit, so th hardly an image escapes from his pen witho their mark being laid upon it. Describing pawnshop near The World's End, that drea no-man's land between Chelsea and Fulham, says, "in an eating-house which I frequente there was always, for a few pence, a prom portion of pease pudding, and I knew fairly w the pawnshop round the corner, quiet as a co fessional with small wooden partitions of yello coarse varnish."

"Quiet as a confessional"! How deadly th quietness, as it creeps into the most remo secrecies of this poet's imagination. In almost macabre essay describing his meeting wi Joyce in Paris, and the geographical Dub reminiscences in which they indulged togeth he speaks of Joyce "gazing abstractly through di glaucous spectacles, and sighing to himself . in the intolerable circumstance of silence," a he recalls their school with "Jesuits in bla soutanes, the brass candlesticks turned upon so common lathe that had seemed to him like 't battered mail of angels,' and, with heart in sho I waited, having had, as I fancied, those though that are forbidden by the sixth commandme of stone, for the fatal sound of the sliding pa

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f the confession box, until suddenly the tenuous oice of Dedalus broke the silence like falling lass—and Jesuits, boys, and all the abracadabra f childhood vanished down the trapdoors of the ind to lie in wait for the next dream or perilous emperature."

Yes, there they lie, and the reader can see them rouching, so that he finds in this writer's verse nd prose an added drama of which the author, erhaps, is unaware.

But Mr. Clarke's conscious drama is in itself fficient, if only he will be persuaded to use it lly in the novel, or biography, or verse-play. is handling of straight narrative is admirable, nd one essay in this book, called *Shipwreck off onegal*, is a little gem of evocative writing. The cident, the atmosphere, the character studies f a handful of mariners gathered round a fire n the quay after the loss of their ship, are presented as economically as anything Stevenson did his last great fragment *The Weir of Hermiston.* r. Clarke gets down to the unforgettable elements that survive mere picturesqueness. As he ys, "Shipwreck is only picturesque in town maginings and in books. But, in reality, men re stunned and humiliated by sudden loss of eir power, and shelterless, they are aware, stinctively, of the ancient enmity of sky and ck." That ancient enmity is another crouching rce underlying Mr. Clarke's work.

RICHARD CHURCH

A COALFIELD CHRONICLE

harity Main. By MARK BENNEY. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

The author of this most discerning book was pparently sent into the Durham coalfield at bout the same time as myself—over two years go: he came "charged . . . with the task of preading the gospel of co-operation on both sides f the industry." In this hallowed battlefield made an unwelcome and embarrassed third, it was happily as natural as it was necessary n him to seek out the causes which underlay e difficulties he found here. His label was ndustrial Relations; mine, Optant Trainee: t our impressions vary only as did our experi- nces. His experience was as wide as he could ake it in the short time he spent here, and his ir for sociology combined with his job not only bringing out the institutional and traditional ackground of the miners, but also in tracing the haracteristics of their psychology to those of their ork. A disinterested effort at research in this irection could hardly fail to be rewarded; but as they stand his findings are acutely revealing, and quite tragic.

Buried as the industry is beneath a slag of figures, Mr. Benney is blessed in his energy in leaving no statistical stone unturned: his careful descriptions are of what is typical, and are presented in terms of humanity. He is specially careful not to offend his colleagues, or anyone he met; but I cannot regard this as a reason for concealing the identity of whole counties and cities, which must rather act as a stimulant to finer curiosity.

The past is one gruesome struggle in hope of the "myth of nationalisation." The owner puts up a few streaks of unbroken squalor next his pit with no thought of further obligation; and the effect is seen in the communal spirit of the miners and the general social functions of their union. Social resources had to arise out of co-operation but the influence of Newcastle and civilisation acted increasingly against the mines and this outcast life. Again, there is the frustration caused by the incalculable setbacks which beset underground work at all times, engendering a covetous pride in hardship and a suspicious and unscrupulously aggressive cast of mind. This is seen in the failure of that democratic experiment, the pit production committee—each side has its inscrutable scapegoat, and there is no constructive test of the evidence for any grievance. Also in the union's habit of "concealing demands made for purely financial reasons behind elaborate rationalisations about safety."

The manager is confronted by expanses of coal lying stranded behind worked-out areas nearer to the shaft, a legacy left him by his predecessors in their price-cutting scramble for cheap promotion. But it is to the owner, idling in dread of nationalisation and gleaning the dividends on what his father invested, that the author names this coalfield "Charity Main" after the slag-heap where miners were able to scrape bits of coal from amongst the stone.

Mr. Benney concludes with his last official act; a report equally succinct in detailed diagnosis and in more general prescription. I hope it may have some effect. "The Government has paid its wergild, sometimes to the miners, sometimes to the owners, to buy a year or two of peace. It has set up Commission after Commission to decide between the claims of one side and another, but has not, to my knowledge, spent a farthing on social research into this most disputed of hinterlands."

WILLIAM GARNETT

Quiet Skies on Salween. By ELLEN THORP. *Jonathan Cape.* 7s. 6d.

The artificial divisions of the atlas distort geography sadly and it is difficult to realise that Burma, which usually appears on the same page as India, is in many ways more strongly influenced by China. The monasteries of saffron-robed monks, the gongs and lanterns, the red and yellow silk umbrellas are variations on themes we think of as Chinese, but the Burmese tradition is a very distinct one, gayer, more spontaneous, less intellectual than either of its neighbours. Burma has its own culture, its peculiar skills; the tinkling pagodas tumbling down in the jungle are as characteristic as the jungle itself with its peacocks and leopards.

Miss Thorp spent the first sixteen years of her life at Taunggyi in the Shan States, where her father was principal of the school to which the Shan chiefs sent their sons. When they first arrived, in 1906, Taunggyi was a twelve days journey from Rangoon, but in spite of snakes, mosquitos, earthquakes and the monsoon, and their physical and intellectual isolation, she and her sisters seem to have had an admirable education and a childhood enviable in the extreme, since elephant picnics and Buddhist festivals can compare with any treats of an English childhood. Her early chapters are uninteresting—there are too many pet animals and the writing is faintly arch and encumbered with quotations. But the book improves greatly; particularly, since Miss Thorp is a better hand at places than at people, in her descriptions of her father's expeditions to visit the parents of his pupils. She has the merit of realising the unfailing charm of facts, and the courage to describe in detail clothes, food, table manners or the technique of making lacquer. The book succeeds, as it deserves, in making her home sickness comprehensible, and in creating a real and vivid landscape in the reader's mind in place of the vast oppressive conservatory summoned up by the word "jungle."

Histoire de France. De 1715 À Nos Jours. By JACQUES MADAULE. *Gallimard* 1945. 275 *fr.*

French historians have not been idle during the years of Nazi occupation. This second volume of a new history of France is a fine example of French capacity for lucid exposition and condensation of the essentials. M. Madaule's book makes fascinating reading because its author is able to write with a wider historical perspective, if one compares his book with other recent attempts to present French history as a whole (think, e.g., of Seignobos' *Histoire sincère de la nation française* or Bayet's *Histoire de France*). The tragedy of 1940 throws light on the revolution of 1848, and again the sequence of the 1848 period is admirably

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